

PLAYSTATION 4



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ISSUE NO236
FEEL THE BURN



EXCLUSIVE
FINAL FANTASY XV

FF legends Nomura and Kitase
talk PS4 and life after Lightning

INFAMOUS SECOND SON



REVEALING DEV
INTERVIEW



NEW POWERS
DETAILED



SCORCHING
PS4 SCREENS

(AND THIS IS ONE OF THEM. YES, REALLY)

THE ELDER
SCROLLS ONLINE

By the Nine, it's a Skyrim MMO!

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REVIEWS**

BEYOND: TWO SOULS FIFA 14 KILLZONE: MERCENARY
PUPPETEER KINGDOM HEARTS HD 1.5 REMIX LOST PLANET 3

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PS4

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Welcome **PLAY**

The UK's only independent PlayStation magazine

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INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

The full scoop on Sucker Punch's smoking sequel

It's an addiction



I've become a little bit obsessed with *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* lately. For reasons I still can't really explain, I put an inhuman amount of time into

the beta despite knowing full well that my character would be wiped at the end of it. But her death was not in vain – Melynx Pum, the tiny pirate cat, was reborn the moment the servers went live again for early access and the pair of us have barely stopped since.

And now I remember why I'm not allowed to play MMOs. For someone with such an addictive personality, it's genuinely dangerous and given the amount of different games I like, want and need to play for my job, I really should know better. I've been strong before. I managed to wean myself off *Star Wars Galaxies* before it could work its Jedi mind tricks on me, avoided *The Old Republic* entirely and can somehow claim to have gone the best part of a decade without so much as downloading the *World Of Warcraft* client. But now, my resolve has broken. And I'm hooked. Bollocks.

I'm going to blame Square Enix for my own weakness, if only because I think I'm now hard-coded to play anything with the words 'final' and 'fantasy' in quick succession in the title. *FFVII* and *FFVIII* were my formative years in RPG gaming, still two of my favourites and I've finished every once since. So I had to play *XIV*. To completion. Whatever that means in an MMO. I think it might mean 'forever'. Gulp.

Thinking about it, getting to speak with legends Kitase and Nomura for this issue's awesome *FF* feature recently probably didn't help me steer clear of this social landmine. And thinking slightly harder about it, neither did seeing Squall, Selphie and the rest all HD'd up in the new *Kingdom Hearts* remaster.

Ah, who am I trying to kid? I'm just weak. Enjoy the issue. I'm going back to Eorzea – if you need me, just /whistle.

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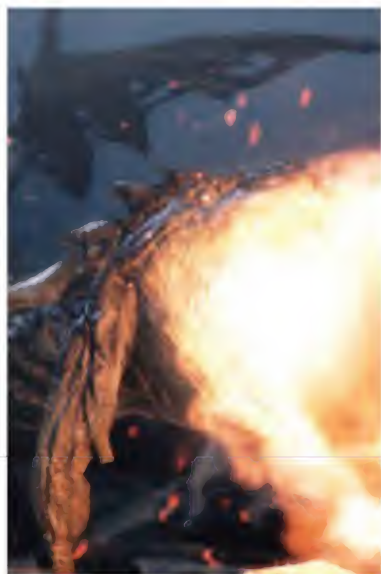
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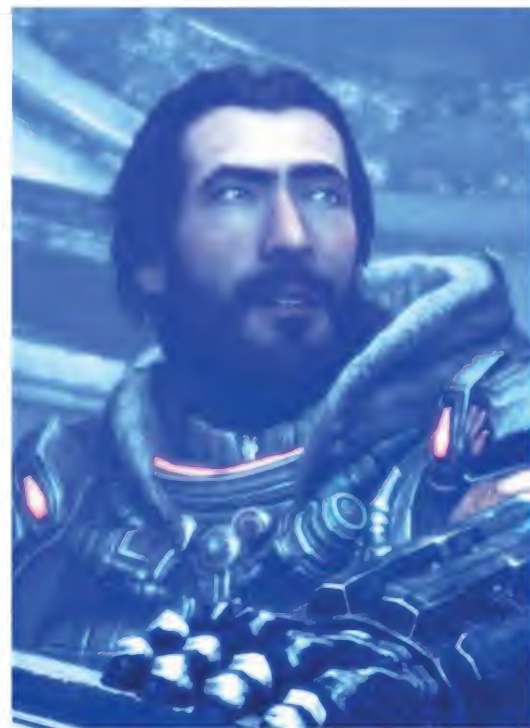
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EXCLUSIVELY ON YOUR DISC



KILLZONE AND BATTLEFIELD MULTIPLAYER FOOTAGE

Get your first look
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and *Battlefield 4*.

TOP 10

We list the ten best
open world games
on the PS3. Have a
gander and see if you
agree with us. Are we
right or what? Bonus
points for guessing
what comes in at
number one...



TRAILER COMMENTARIES

Everything from PS3
free-to-play flight sim
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to a new gameplay
walkthrough of
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Black Flag* on PS4.

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Can't be bothered
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video reviews of
GTA V, *Kingdom
Hearts 1.5 HD*,
Lost Planet 3 and
Killzone: Mercenary.
You might learn
something. Maybe.



SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE!



△○×□ Delsin's smoke powers give him all kinds of abilities. Just imagine what he can do when he's absorbed the powers of others...

INFAMOUS: SECOND SON



Anticipation for PS4 is already bordering on a fever pitch and, in terms of the launch line-up, the likes of *Killzone: Shadow Fall* and *DriveClub* look set to kick the next generation off in style. But, there's another promising exclusive that's steeped in infamy...

No matter where you live on the planet, be it the sun trap of Melbourne in Australia, the snowy peaks of Vancouver in Canada or the temperamental climate of the United Kingdom, it's all too easy to become disenchanted by your surrounding scenery. After all, don't they say that familiarity breeds contempt? But even if the view from your bedroom window is of a garish building site framed through a rain soaked pane, there's always beauty to be found in the surrounding area for those who are prepared to look. And in the case of the Seattle-based *Sucker Punch*, it also offers an opportunity to save on costly travel receipts.

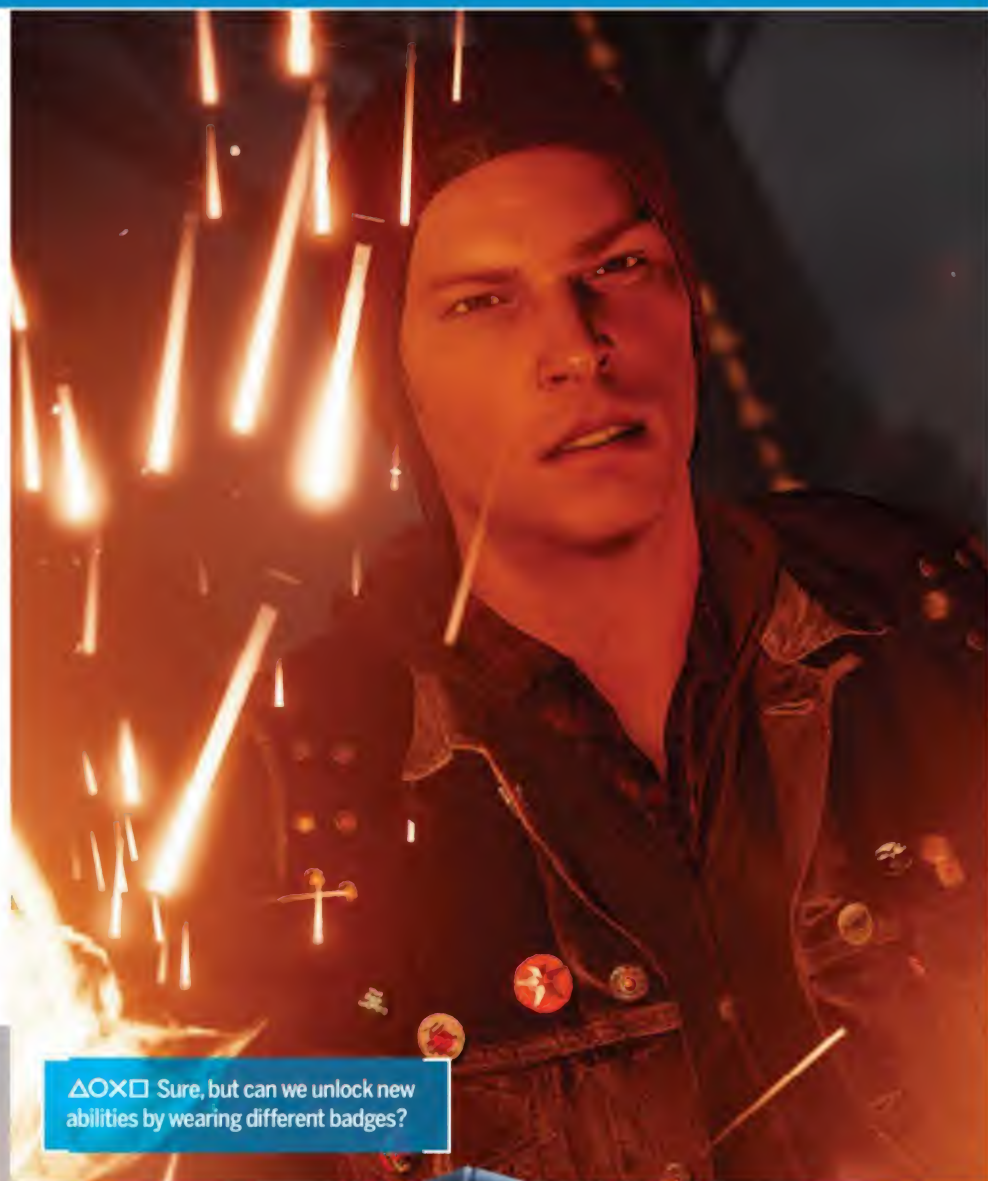
As the third main instalment in the critically and commercially successful *inFamous* series, *Second Son* is backed up by an established sci-fi mythology that began with the original game and was further fleshed out by *inFamous 2*. When we last saw the original protagonist, Cole MacGrath, he was presented with two options – sacrifice himself to save humanity from a plague that was caused by the birth of his powers or instead sacrifice humanity so that more superhuman Conduits, themselves immune to the plague, could exist in the aftermath. According to *Sucker Punch* and the online PSN trophy data, the majority of players chose, interestingly, to be the saint rather than the sinner. ➤

► As a result, *Second Son* is set seven years after the events of *inFamous 2* and follows the good ending as opposed to the bad. The final fate of Cole remains a mystery, even though most of the world seems to assume he's dead. But while the activation of the Ray Field Inhibitor was supposed to kill all Conduits across the globe, it seems that some managed to survive. This uncertainty, coupled with the fear that another Conduit as powerful as Cole or The Beast may threaten humanity once more, leads to the founding of the Department Of Unified Protection. The DUP for short, this agency monitors Conduit activity – or as it likes to call them, bio-terrorists.

From what we've seen of the game so far, it seems like the DUP are less well-meaning guardians of humanity and more oppressive dictators. This probably explains why the new lead, Delsin Rowe, comes across as a cocky skater-boy fighting against the man. He wears a beanie, has a jacket dotted with pin badges –

including one with the *Sly Cooper* logo – and he's an aspiring graffiti artist. But while the 24-year-old Delsin looks like the poster boy for the lost generation, he seems like a more complex character than his rather wooden predecessor. This is something that also appears to be true of his Conduit powers.

In the first *inFamous*, Cole was a master of Electrokinesis and the more advanced Electromagnetism, and during the events of the second game, he also gained access to either the icy Cryokinesis or the flaming Pyrokinesis depending on the decisions that the player made. In comparison, Delsin has a copycat ability that's more in line with Rogue from *X-Men* and Peter Petrelli from *Heroes*. We're not entirely sure if he absorbs another Conduit's power by simply touching them, or if he instead has to rob or possibly even kill them for the privilege, but it seems that the first power he receives is the strange ability to drain, project and even morph into smoke. ►



ΔΟΧ□ Sure, but can we unlock new abilities by wearing different badges?



ΔΟΧ□ Hovering via smoke is cool, but the manner in which Delsin does so looks very familiar to how Cole flew around in the last game.



“It’s good to see that some studios are experimenting with the new features rather than just sticking to what worked previously”

► If we had to draw up a definitive list of superpowers then smoke manipulation would definitely come below immortality, invisibility and time travel, but because Delsin can stockpile his powers rather than being limited to one at a time, the ability to mix and match in the middle of combat is an interesting draw. Our main hope is that the powers offer genuine diversity as opposed to being slight variations on the same theme. After all, there are only so many times that we can fire an ice, fire, lightning and smoke bolt without developing an acute case of elemental apathy.

Thankfully, the combat we’ve seen so far looks promising. With his smoke powers at the ready, Delsin can play the long-range game by firing projectiles from his hand as well as charging up for a more devastating attack, and if he wants to get up-close and personal he can take leaf out of the *God Of War* manuscript by striking the DUP soldiers with

a chain that he keeps wrapped around his wrist. But perhaps most impressively of all, Delsin appears to have his own

variation of Cole’s Thunder Drop called the Smoke Comet Drop – whereby the hatted hell-raiser turns into a smouldering puff of smoke and launches himself high into the air before plummeting down like a runaway anvil.

It’s not the most original manoeuvre to ever feature in a game of this type but it’s clear that, when it comes to processing power and random access memory, the PlayStation 4 has gifted Sucker Punch with enough resources to craft a world that not only looks more visually accomplished but also more reactively dynamic to boot. The last game dabbled with the idea of destructible scenery, but now it appears to be a much more intrinsic part of the combat system to the point where anything you destroy remains demolished indefinitely. Target a walkway with a fully charged smoke shot and you can topple the guards atop it, and by the same ►



YELLING OF TROY

When watching the handful of trailers that have been released for *Second Son* so far, you may get a sense of déjà vu when you hear the voice of Delsin. That’s because the game’s lead is voiced by Troy Baker, the same man who voiced Joel in *The Last Of Us* and Booker DeWitt in *BioShock Infinite*. If that’s not impressive enough, then you can also add Snow Villiers from *Final Fantasy XIII* and Revolver Ocelot from the forthcoming *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain* to Baker’s voice acting résumé. Oh, and did we also mention that Baker is one of the few actors to have portrayed both Batman and The Joker thanks to his work on *Lego Batman 2: DC Super Heroes* and *Batman: Arkham Origins*? The guy clearly has chameleonic vocal chords.

JOEL

“I guess no matter how hard you try, you can’t escape your past”

BOOKER DEWITT

“You think a dip in the river is gonna wash away the things I’ve done?”

SNOW VILLIERS

“Wishes can come true, but not if you just wait for miracles”

RYU HAYABUSA

“I made a promise to protect you... and Canna”

REVOLVER OCELOT

“You’re a legend in the eyes of those who live on the battlefield”

THE JOKER

“I present to you, the death of the Batman”



► stretch, the DUP can dethrone Delsin if you choose a perch that's less than stable.

This doesn't mean that Sucker Punch is muscling in on Volition's approach to terrain management, as much of the Seattle cityscape appears to be indestructible.

Even so, the open-world scope of the series hasn't been lost. So far we've seen the Seattle Space Needle and several different areas within the Seattle Center – real world destinations that you can jump on a plane and visit today. It remains to be seen what other famous landmarks the development team will transplant into the game, but this interpretation of The Emerald City is already looking like one of the first great tours of the new PlayStation 4 era.

Before his fateful run-in with the Ray Sphere, Cole was a parkour enthusiast who used his shimmying skills to aid his job as a bike courier.

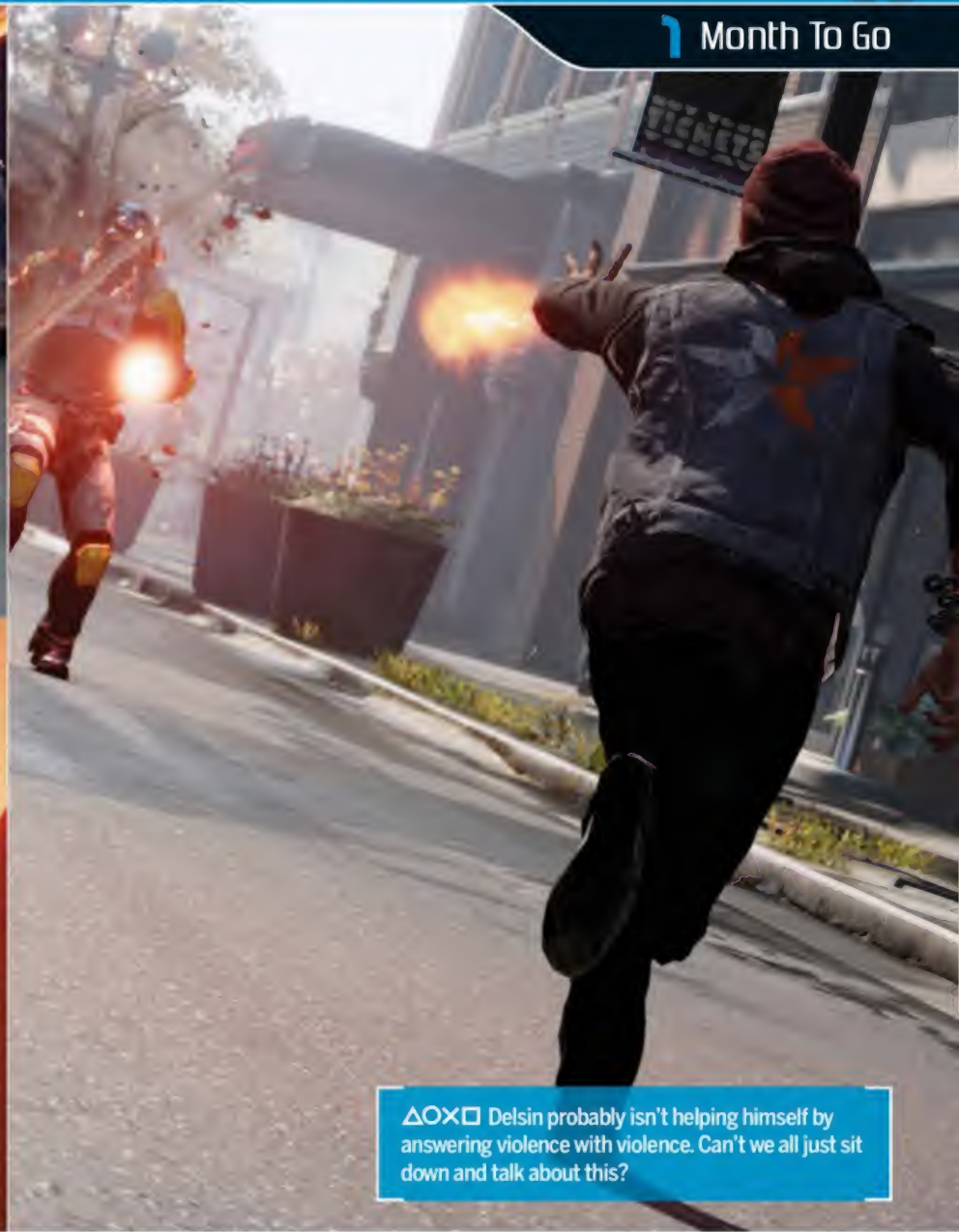
So when he eventually gained the ability to discharge lightning from his fingertips like the son of Odin, he was well suited to exploring the heights and sights of both Empire City and New Marais. The fact that Delsin is a graffiti artist seems to suggest that he also knows a thing or two about the art of free-running, and much like Cole before him he can enhance his natural athleticism with his repertoire of Conduit skills.

Some of these abilities appear to be stand-ins from the previous games. The glide that slows your aerial descent, for instance, is just a smoke-themed take on the Static Thrusters. Nonetheless, some of the other abilities we've seen are less plagiarised. Delsin can use the ethereal properties of his smoking skills to dodge out the way of enemy attacks, pass through wire fences without making a sound and even shoot to the top of a building by entering an exposed ventilation vent – Mario-style. And while the early games tended to favour the sledgehammer approach, it seems that Delsin can sneak up behind a guard before taking them out in a stealthy manner.

Stealth missions in open-world games tend to be a bit of a ►



ΔΟΧ□ Society has gone downhill since *inFamous 2*, a corrupt police state that hunts down super powered individuals. Doesn't sound too inviting.



△OX□ Delsin probably isn't helping himself by answering violence with violence. Can't we all just sit down and talk about this?



► chore. The mechanics are usually underdeveloped and boil down to bopping a series of enemies on the head as they follow a simple patrol pattern, but if Sucker Punch can make it so that sneaking around the Seattle alleyways and suburbs is not only viable but also inherently rewarding, then it may succeed where so many other games have stumbled. It just needs to make sure that the cloak and dagger option isn't completely overshadowed by the far noisier abilities that let you turn a perfectly good car into a burning husk of deformed metal.

“ With Delsin's powers being less established in nature, your options will be dictated by the available resources ”

Another thing to consider are the limitations that Sucker Punch will place on Delsin's powers. When Cole ran out of Battery Cores in the first two games he had to make like a Duracell vampire by preying on street lights and rooftop fans, but with Delsin's powers being less established in nature, your options

will be dictated by the available resources. If you're surrounded by combustible materials then making smoke won't be too much of a stretch, but if you end up in an area that's comparatively fire-retardant, then one of his undisclosed powers – perhaps something that's reliant on fire hydrants and big puddles – may be the only way to go.

Anyone who's ever held a fire hose or reared a Squirtle into a Blastoise knows that jets of pressurised water can be quite formidable, but while the Aquaman routine would be an obvious choice, the second power

but in terms of combat usefulness, we can only assume that glowing in the dark is the tip of the iceberg.

Another pillar of the *inFamous* series is the Karma system. Depending on the actions that the player made throughout the first two games, Cole would steadily turn into a virtuous figure who aided the citizens or a rampaging hellion who deliberately targeted them. His karmic status was reflected by the onscreen Karma gauge, and his rank – be it Guardian, Champion, Hero, Thug, Outlaw or Infamous – determined the abilities that he could learn. His appearance and temperament even visibly changed, with blue and red lighting representing good and bad karma respectively. But while Cole often felt like a blank slate that you could mould into a saviour or sadist, Delsin seems more predefined.

Most of the cinematics we've seen so far revolve around Delsin and his older brother, Reggie. It seems that while Delsin is the black sheep of the family, Reggie is a straight-laced lawman who tries to keep his brother on the straight and narrow after ►

that's been confirmed is more unusual. Simply called Neon, all we know about this power so far is that Delsin acquires it from a Conduit named Abigail Walker (who also goes by the name of Fetch) and that it can be fuelled by draining neon lights and signs. It sounds like a good ability to have if you're a budding spelunker,



► the death of their parents. This proves a difficult task when Delsin is revealed to be a Conduit, but instead of handing him into the authorities, Reggie continues to look out for his brother while also acting as a kind of moral compass. Supposedly, this means Reggie will fill the role of Zeke Dunbar, Cole's best friend from the first games, as Delsin's main support.

It's not all plain sailing, though, as when Reggie tries to arrest Fetch for being a "filthy" bio-terrorist, Delsin immediately intervenes by saying, "when it comes to Conduits, it's my call. Not yours, not ours, mine!" Could

powers and gameplay systems until the game's release.

One thing that Sucker Punch isn't trying to hide are the advances in motion capture and what it calls "emotion capture" – technology that makes Delsin and company appear more realistic during cut-scenes. Troy Baker, one of gaming's most prolific voice actors and the man behind Delsin's anti-establishment attitude, was asked to come into the studio so the development team could capture his body and facial movements simultaneously. The results clearly speak for themselves, as not only do

Delsin's facial expressions appear more natural when compared to most games

“The Emerald City is already looking like one of the first great tours of the new PlayStation 4 era”

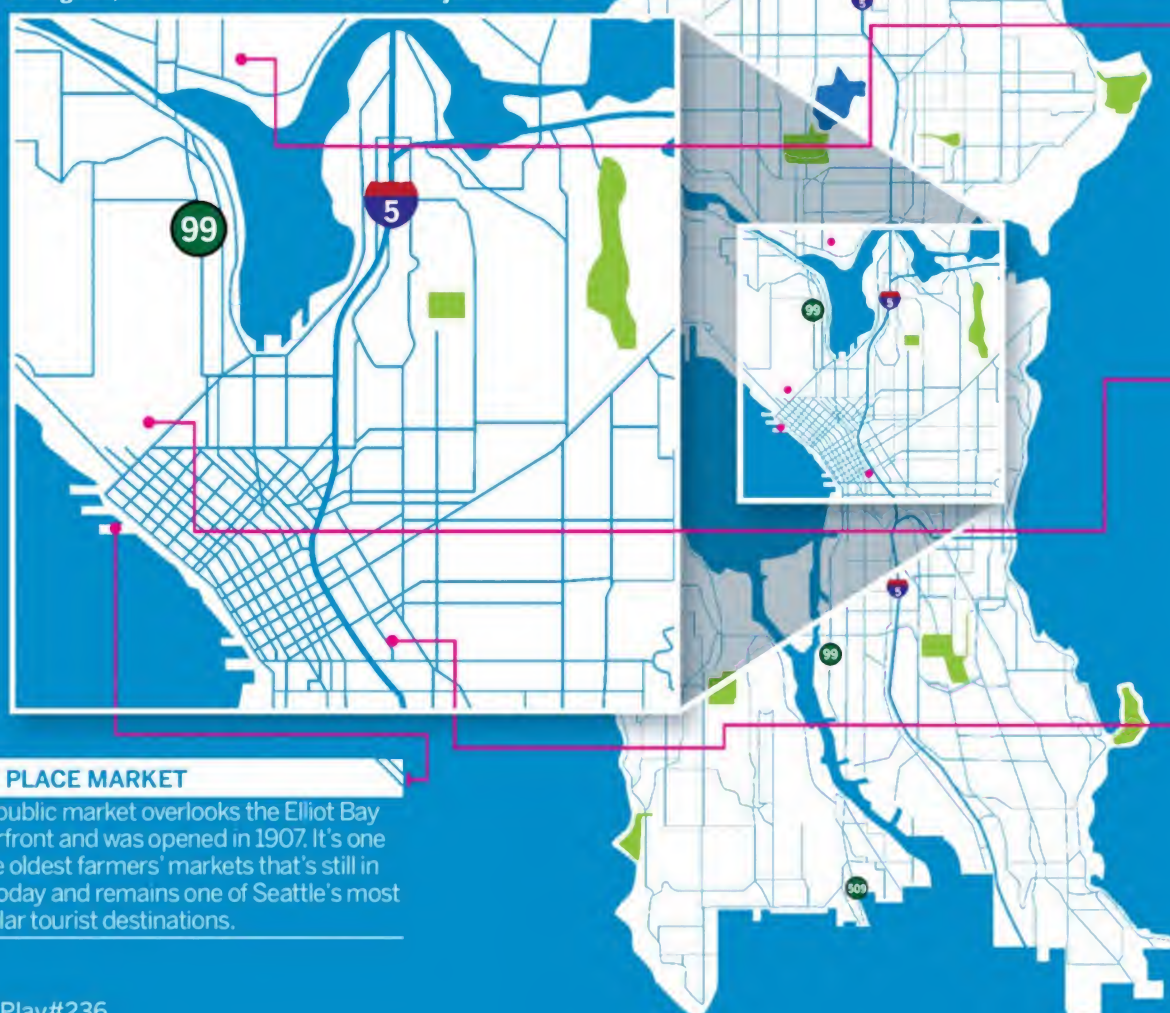
this tie into a new karma system whereby you can choose to harm or help the Conduits you meet as well as battling the DUP? It's hard to say for sure, as the gameplay we've seen doesn't include a Karma gauge or anything similar. In fact, the HUD appears to be non-existent, with the notable exception of a crosshair, but this could be a way to hide the other

we've seen running on current-gen hardware. Baker's proven acting talents heighten every self-assured grin and sinister smile.

Graphical and expressive fidelity aside, it's safe to assume that *Second Son* will retain a lot of the hallmarks that the series is known for. The city of Seattle will be large in scope, the DUP will become more formidable as the ►

WELCOME TO SEATTLE

We know that the Space Needle, Seattle Center and Monorail will all feature in the game, but what about Seattle's other major landmarks?



PIKE PLACE MARKET

This public market overlooks the Elliot Bay waterfront and was opened in 1907. It's one of the oldest farmers' markets that's still in use today and remains one of Seattle's most popular tourist destinations.

FREMONT TROLL

Sculpted by four local artists, the Fremont Troll is a public sculpture that's located under the George Washington Memorial Bridge. It measures over five metres tall, weighs over 6,000kg and clutches a real Volkswagen Beetle.

EMP MUSEUM

Established by Microsoft co-founder, Paul Allen, the EMP Museum is dedicated to ideas that fuel contemporary popular culture. Past exhibits include Yes Yes Y'all: The First Decade Of Hip-Hop and AC/DC: Australia's Family Jewels.

COLUMBIA CENTER

This 76-story tall skyscraper is the tallest building in the state of Washington. Construction of the building began in 1982 and it wasn't finished till 1985. It also plays host to the largest firefighter competition in the world.

△OX□ Moving to a real-world setting is an interesting choice by Sucker Punch. We can't wait to jump off that tower!



➤ game progresses and some central villain will almost certainly come to the forefront as you advance through the story. We'd also bet our collection of Royal Doulton eggcups that the likes of Cole, Zeke, Lucy and possibly even Nix and John will play some part in the story, even if it's by legacy rather than actually showing up physically.

When talking about the PlayStation 4 and its impressive selection of launch window titles, it's easy to downplay the new console as just a huge performance boost over its predecessor. This isn't something that Sucker Punch can be accused of, as not only is it working hard to make its first PS4 title look fantastic, it's also investing time with the DualShock 4's touchpad functionality. It's not a mandatory part of the game, but there are moments when you can use the touchpad to perform delicate movements. This includes an early section where Delsin has to move his hand across a checkpoint scanner so the DUP can verify his DNA.

It may turn out to be a gimmick, of course, but it's good to see that some studios are experimenting with the new features rather than just

sticking to what worked previously. We also hope that more developers make use of the returning Sixaxis feature, as despite a few games that championed its motion sensing capabilities, it was overlooked to the point where we often forgot it existed. That's not to say that Sucker Punch should make some kind of telekinesis powers that only work with pad-waggling movements – God forbid – but we'd welcome some subtle implementation nonetheless.

For now, *inFamous: Second Son* is shaping up to be a worthy follow-up to its less charismatic predecessors. It builds upon the unlikely superhero premise with a protagonist that seems more believably flawed and powers that offers much more in the way of versatility. We'll reserve judgement until we get an extended hands-on and experience the strength of the missions and enemy AI first-hand, but based on these early impressions, it has the potential to be the first must-have title for the PlayStation 4 post-launch. It's also proof that taking inspiration from your hometown can be a very smart move indeed... △OX□

POWER LUNCH

WE SIT DOWN WITH SECOND SON'S GAME DIRECTOR, NATE FOX, TO DISCUSS HOW SUCKER PUNCH APPROACHED ITS FIRST PLAYSTATION 4 TITLE AND WHY ART STUDENTS SHOULD LEAVE AI PROGRAMMING TO THE PROFESSIONALS

YOU TALKED ABOUT HOW THE DUALSHOCK 4 HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DESIGN PROCESS. HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD ACCESS TO THE DUALSHOCK 4 AND HOW HAS IT AFFECTED YOUR APPROACH TO THE GAME'S DESIGN?

We were working on *inFamous: Second Son* while Sony was working on the DualShock 4. Sony did a great job with communication for this generation. It asked developers like us what we wanted for this generation and how we wanted the new game pad to function. It took this feedback on board and tried out different things. We saw a lot of different prototypes that came out of the development process and they all felt distinctively different. What we have now is essentially the best of the best. A touchpad allows us to implement new and intuitive gameplay concepts and, frankly, one of the best things about the new controller is the sticks and triggers are so much better.

WHEN THE DUALSHOCK 3 CAME OUT THE SIXAXIS FUNCTIONALITY WAS ONLY PARTIALLY EMBRACED BY BOTH GAMERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY.

WITH THIS IN MIND, HAVE YOU MADE THE TOUCHPAD INTEGRATION ESSENTIAL OR OPTIONAL?

In *Second Son* the touchpad will be optional. We use it at certain points in the game rather than all the time. You'll use it at points in the game where the pace is a little slower and you can concentrate on things in finer detail. A lot of Delsin's moves are so big and explosive that they don't really lend themselves to that kind of surgical precision. The touchpad moments aren't everywhere but when they do show up it's just to focus your attention a little bit more.

HOW DOES SECOND SON SHOWCASE THE NEW HARDWARE IN TERMS OF OPEN WORLDS AND SANDBOX ENVIRONMENTS, AND ESPECIALLY IN WAYS THAT COULDN'T BE ACHIEVED IN THE PREVIOUS GENERATION?

We put a lot of energy into making Delsin's superpowers look spectacular. We put a lot of attention into the lighting and particle effects so that when you blast out a lot of energy the world reacts dynamically around you. The PlayStation 4 enables us to make much more detailed environments than we've had in the past and they're much more interactive. You can transform your body into different elements. You can travel through pipes in silence. In this sense the world is much more permeable. It's all about making the world believable so that when you get superpowers you believe that they could actually exist.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE CHANGES THAT YOU'VE MADE TO THE AI SYSTEM?

We rewrote the way that our AI works. We wanted to make sure that the combat evolves around you so that each confrontation offers something a little bit different. We hired a lot of guys who'd worked on first-person shooters because they really understand the world of dynamic combat. I come from art school so I don't really work on any engine aspects, but I'm always impressed by the progressive thought process that the enemies show when trying to bring down Delsin. How do the AI guys do it? I don't have a clue but I love the fact that it seems so natural.

WE'RE SEEN THAT DELSIN CAN ABSORB THE POWERS OF OTHER CONDUITS. WHAT MORE CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THIS MIMICRY POWER?

So yeah, Delsin can hunt down other Conduits and absorb their powers. We've shown how he uses smoke a fair amount. The details of that are still a little under wraps but I can tell you that when Delsin uses smoke his play style is very different. As you find more and more Conduits and take their powers, you get a variety of play experiences that affect everything from combat to how you travel around the city.

HOW DOES THE GOOD AND EVIL PARADIGM WORK COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS GAMES IN THE SERIES?

Good and evil karma is a cornerstone of the franchise and it's absolutely back in *Second Son*. We view it as one of the pillars of the series. As your powers grow and evolve, the people in the world react to you differently and, ultimately, the story changes based on the decisions you make.

PS4

THE LAUNCH LINE-UP IN FULL



With just weeks to go until PlayStation 4 arrives, we finally know pretty much every game that will be available from the start.

While most of these will be ready to go from day one, some are set to arrive a little later, but there's none of the usual vague 'launch window' rubbish this time around – all 34 games here are due out by the end of the year, so within the first month of the PS4's life. Some will slip, we're sure, and others will be brought forward or appear out of nowhere nearer the time to replace them. But either way, here is your first wave of next generation games. Know which you'll be getting yet? We still don't have a bloody clue...



ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

DEVELOPER: UBISOFT DIGITAL/BOXED: BOTH

Ubisoft is keen to tap into both the huge install base of current generation platforms and the buzz surrounding next-gen ones, although the gorgeous PS4 versions of its games are clearly the superior ones. *Assassin's Creed* has long pushed current-gen tech to the limit (and perhaps too far in the case of the ambitious but bug-riddled *ACIII*) so there's scant improvement to report there, but in fairness, it still looks ace by PS3 standards. On PS4, though, the rolling seas and seamless open world are simply stunning. While cross-platform development means it's not quite up there with the likes of *Killzone* and *inFamous* in terms of visuals, it's still going to be a day-one pick if you want to play the very best version of *Black Flag*. Or just love pirates. Either is fine.

FOR FANS OF: SID MEIER'S PIRATES!, ASSASSIN'S CREED II, RISEN 2: DARK WATERS

△OX□ Flintlock pistols aren't just used by enemies – Kenway can equip up to four of them.

BATTLEFIELD 4

DEVELOPER: DICE DIGITAL/BOXED: BOTH

The first-person shooter war has raged for an entire generation and it isn't going to miss even a single day when the next rolls around – both *Battlefield* and *COD* will launch alongside PlayStation 4 hardware and battle can resume. Next-gen power allows visual fidelity, map sizes and player counts to finally catch up with the PC version of the game and, as ever, it's a more grounded, tactical and realistic alternative to the arcade action and lippy youths of Activision's FPS juggernaut. If the destruction of buildings and environments turns out to be free and dynamic rather than scripted, this could be one of the best showcases yet for the true potential of PS4 – even if not, it's still a bloody good shooter.

FOR FANS OF: MAG, BATTLEFIELD 3, GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER



△OX□ An online FPS where you can bring down entire tower blocks? Yeah, we're on board with that.

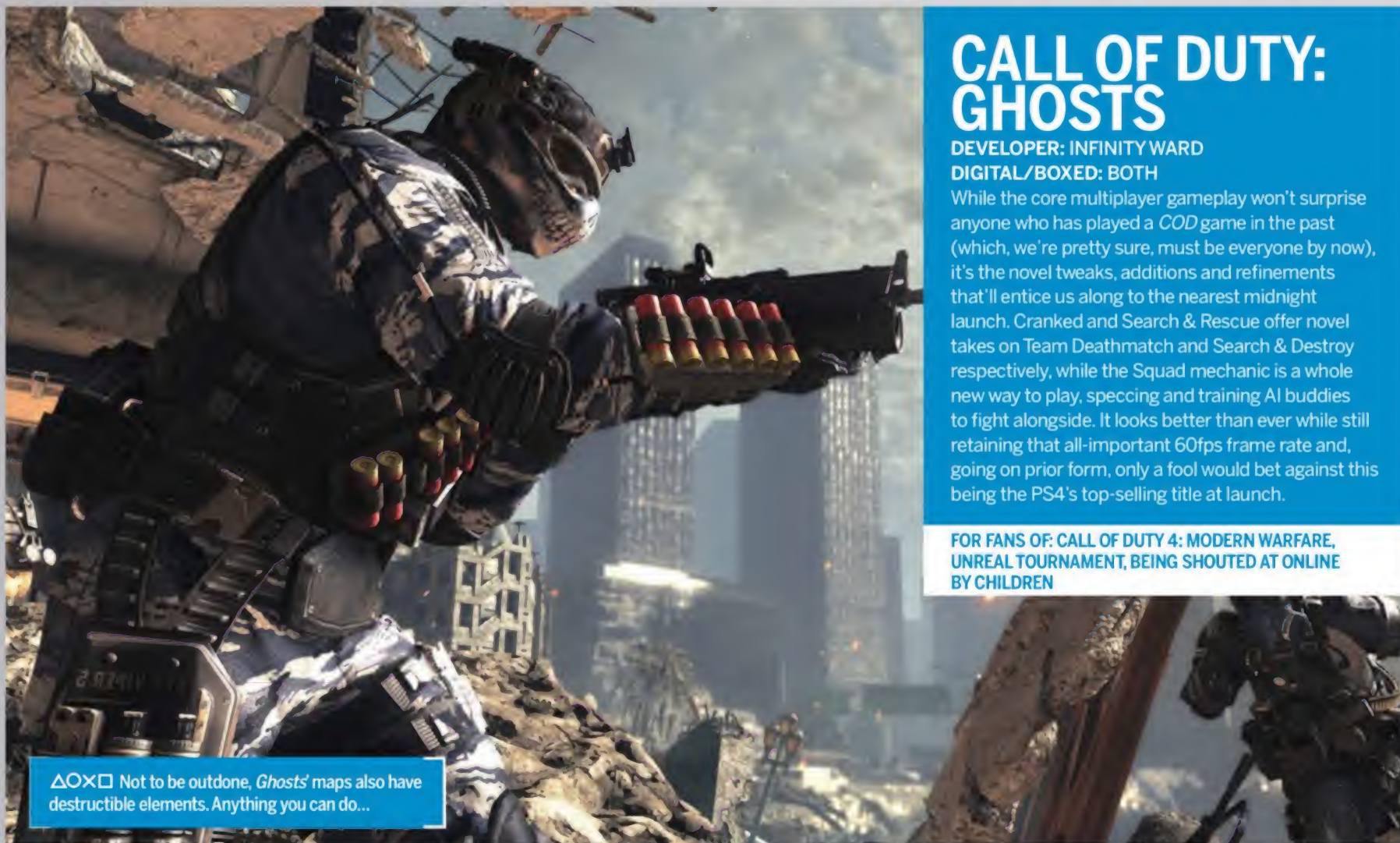
CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS

DEVELOPER: INFINITY WARD

DIGITAL/BOXED: BOTH

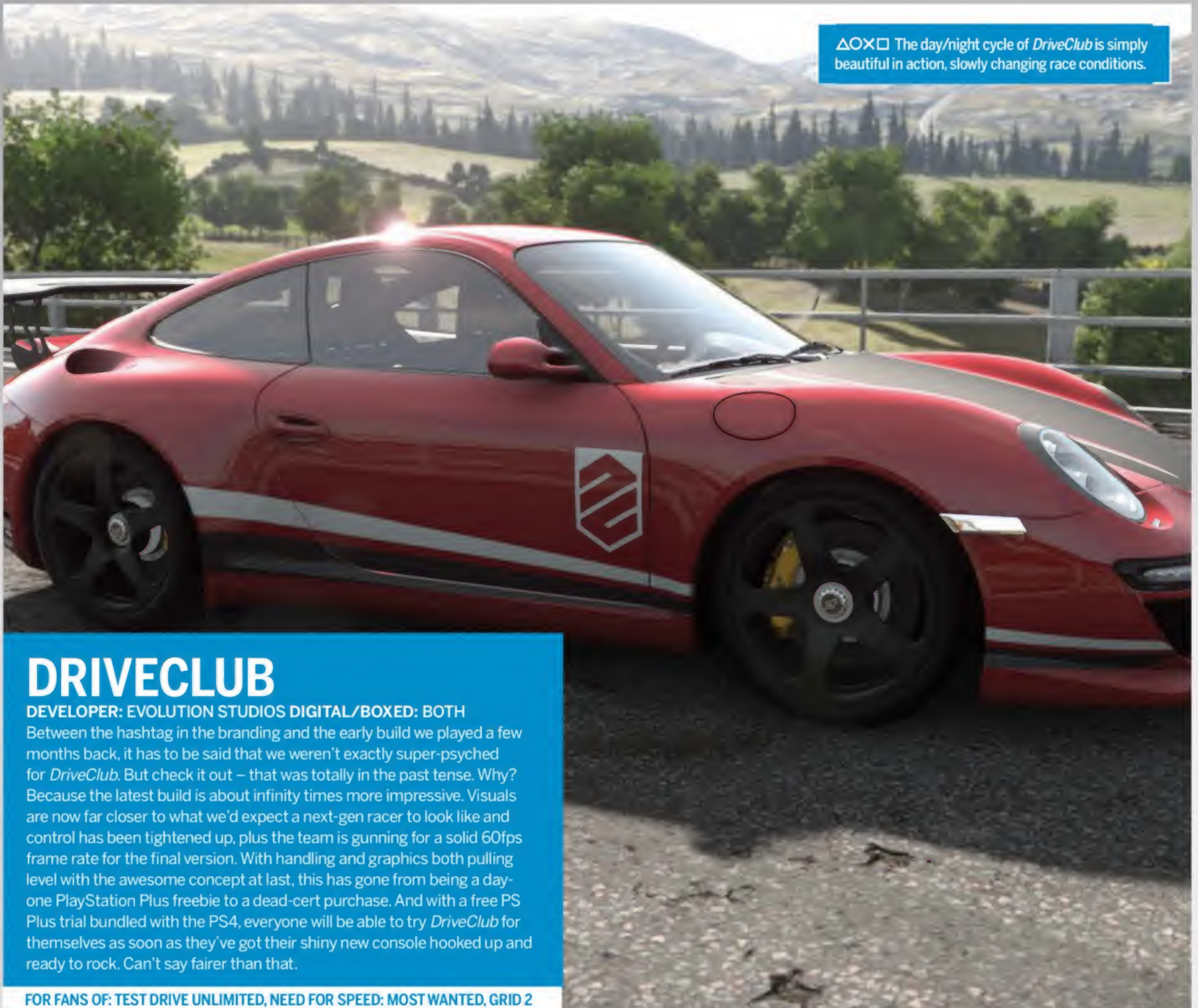
While the core multiplayer gameplay won't surprise anyone who has played a *COD* game in the past (which, we're pretty sure, must be everyone by now), it's the novel tweaks, additions and refinements that'll entice us along to the nearest midnight launch. Cranked and Search & Rescue offer novel takes on Team Deathmatch and Search & Destroy respectively, while the Squad mechanic is a whole new way to play, spec'ing and training AI buddies to fight alongside. It looks better than ever while still retaining that all-important 60fps frame rate and, going on prior form, only a fool would bet against this being the PS4's top-selling title at launch.

FOR FANS OF: CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE, UNREAL TOURNAMENT, BEING SHOUTED AT ONLINE BY CHILDREN



△OX□ Not to be outdone, *Ghosts'* maps also have destructible elements. Anything you can do...

△OX□ The day/night cycle of *DriveClub* is simply beautiful in action, slowly changing race conditions.



DRIVECLUB

DEVELOPER: EVOLUTION STUDIOS **DIGITAL/BOXED:** BOTH

Between the hashtag in the branding and the early build we played a few months back, it has to be said that we weren't exactly super-psyched for *DriveClub*. But check it out – that was totally in the past tense. Why? Because the latest build is about infinity times more impressive. Visuals are now far closer to what we'd expect a next-gen racer to look like and control has been tightened up, plus the team is gunning for a solid 60fps frame rate for the final version. With handling and graphics both pulling level with the awesome concept at last, this has gone from being a day-one PlayStation Plus freebie to a dead-cert purchase. And with a free PS Plus trial bundled with the PS4, everyone will be able to try *DriveClub* for themselves as soon as they've got their shiny new console hooked up and ready to rock. Can't say fairer than that.

FOR FANS OF: TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED, NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED, GRID 2

SUPER MOTHERLOAD

DEVELOPER:

XGEN STUDIOS

DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

A co-op roguelike thing about mining. There are already a few of those, sure – if you're not thinking about *Spelunky* right now, you're doing thinking wrong – but that doesn't mean there's not room for this one as well. Well, until *Spelunky* arrives on PS4. Then it's all over.

FOR FANS OF: SPELUNKY, MR DRILLER, STEAMWORLD DIG



TINY BRAINS

DEVELOPER: SPEARHEAD GAMES

DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

It's four-player *Portal* where you play as a group of lab experiments who have been artificially imbued with remarkable powers. If that sounds a bit weird, don't worry – it most certainly is. The best part of this playful puzzler is the dynamic design, meaning that puzzles and stage layouts will change based on which characters are being played. Which, in theory, should mean even more variety and, in turn, longevity. Colour us intrigued.

FOR FANS OF: PORTAL, QUANTUM CONUNDRUM, PINKY AND THE BRAIN



FIFA 14

DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DIGITAL/BOXED: BOTH

It's often the case when transitioning between generations that one version of a cross-gen title will suffer. Usually it's the next-gen version, devs struggling to get to grips with new hardware architecture or just more comfortable with platforms they know and understand. But we're happy to report that there's no such disparity here – *FIFA 14* on PS4 looks *ridiculous*. With PS4's architecture being so similar to that of a high-spec PC, developers will be able to unlock more of its power from day one and we're already seeing impressive results. We were a little concerned that the entire Ultimate Team mode would be Xbox-exclusive but, thankfully, it's just the 'Legends' aspect – a handful of classic players for use in this one mode that will probably just ruin the balance and turn every good team into a time warp nightmare. Somehow, we don't feel like we're going to be missing much...

FOR FANS OF: FOOTBALL (DUH)



△○×□ There's no next-gen version of *PES* this year, making *FIFA* the only football option on PS4.

JUST DANCE 2014

DEVELOPER: UBISOFT
DIGITAL/BOXED: BOTH

Okay, so it's one of this generation's breakout success stories, with over 40 million games sold worldwide in just four years. But that doesn't change the fact that *Just Dance* is rubbish. We blame the Wii, the franchise's original home – with just the Remote as an input device, the casual-friendly console was only able to track a single limb. Which, in a dancing game, is awful. Move control on PS3 proved equally vague, the scoring system basically guessing whether or not you're dancing well by what one of your hands is doing. Weak. The Xbox 360 version, however, used Kinect for full-body tracking and apparently, the PS4 version will do the same. Well, assuming you've got a PlayStation Camera, anyway.

FOR FANS OF: DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION, SINGSTAR, EYETOY PLAY



△○×□ After playing a crazy amount of *Mercenary* on Vita, we're now even more excited for *Shadow Fall*.

KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

DEVELOPER: GUERRILLA GAMES DIGITAL/BOXED: BOTH

We were already pretty psyched to get our hands on *Killzone* but the recent multiplayer reveal blew us away. Well, as much as an FPS can with the market as saturated as it is. Still, it's all kinds of awesome. There's that great sense of weight that you typically get from the franchise and the game's single-player gadgets and gizmos lend themselves perfectly to competitive play. We've been playing the hell out of *Mercenary*'s excellent online mode, so the lure of something similar but on a much larger scale is one we cannot ignore. Oh, and did we mention that it's beautiful? Because it is. It's beautiful. For a franchise that gets a lot of groans for being the brownest of all the things, it's remarkably colourful. Day one, no question.

FOR FANS OF: RESISTANCE 3, CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS II, CRYISIS 2

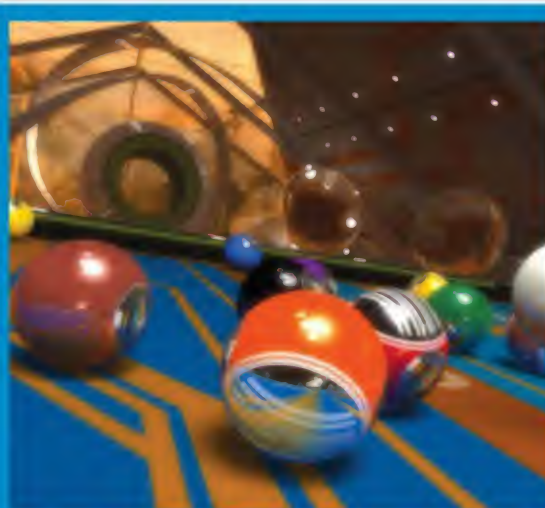


PLANETSID 2

DEVELOPER: SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

Sony's own online shooter should give the big boys a run for their money – not only is it an awesome, epic game but it's also free. There's some concern over whether this will actually make launch after all at the moment, since there's been little sign of the console version and it seems like it may be behind schedule a little. But while we hope it's there day one so that we can join hundreds of other people in the online warzone, we'll happily put up with a delay if it means the game is better in the end.

FOR FANS OF: MAG, BATTLEFIELD 3, RESISTANCE 2

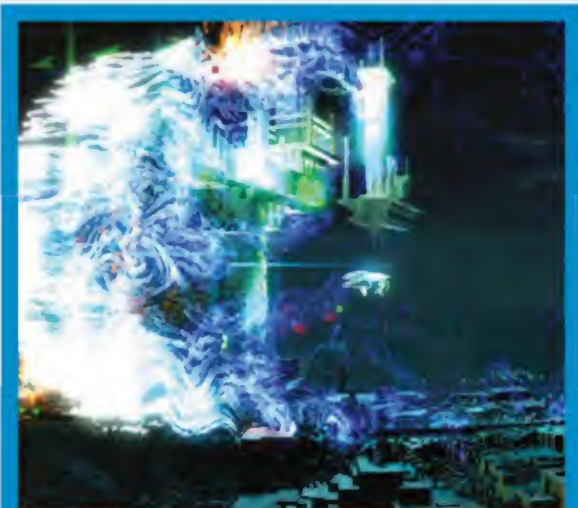


POOL NATION FX

DEVELOPER: CHERRY POP GAMES DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

There's a challenger in the next-gen shiny ball-off! If pinball isn't your bag then maybe a spot of pool will set you straight. We're not sure how much merit there really is to a PlayStation 4 pool game, or what next-gen hardware can really add to this kind of game aside from outrageously detailed graphics. But with even more shiny balls than *Pinball Arcade* (even in multiball), perhaps this will be the one for shine hunters instead.

FOR FANS OF: HUSTLE KINGS, JOHN VIRGO, LITTLEBIGPLANET



RESOGUN

DEVELOPER: HOUSEMARQUE DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

This is Housemarque's latest project and if you've played *Super Stardust HD* (or, more accurately, if you've managed to stop playing *Super Stardust HD*) then you'll know why that's such a big deal. This time, it's a scrolling shooter in the vein of retro 'classic' *Defender* (*Defender* is rubbish) but fear not – the explosions and effects nuking the screen are still in full effect and looking even better than ever. It's free on PlayStation Plus, too. Thanks, Sony.

FOR FANS OF: SUPER STARDUST HD, DEFENDER, DEATHSMILES

△OX□ For many the game that best showcases what next-gen means, *Watch Dogs* looks the nuts.

WATCH DOGS

DEVELOPER: UBISOFT DIGITAL/BOXED: BOTH

So it turns out that the multiplayer aspect of Ubisoft's open-world adventure is exactly what we wanted it to be – it's *Dark Souls* with an iPhone, basically. Players are able to drop into the single-player games of others, where they'll appear as a generic NPC avatar. The objective is to find Aiden and attempt to hack his phone, although he'll be tipped off as soon as you do. Cue an awesome game of cat and mouse as the cover star rushes to trace and kill the hacker, although even just forcing them to flee is enough – the Aiden player will later be able to take revenge on the invader by dropping into their game and attempting a hack of their own. As serial *Souls* invaders, we can't wait to abuse this. Oh, and we're sorry in advance about your phone.

FOR FANS OF: ASSASSIN'S CREED, INFAMOUS, DARK SOULS



DOKI-DOKI UNIVERSE

DEVELOPER: HUMANATURE STUDIOS DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

So even this close to launch, we still don't really know what *Doki-Doki Universe* actually is. But based on the developer's logo and these visuals alone, we know we want to play it. It appears to be some large multi-faceted set of different products, services and games that will come together to form a cutesy community that binds it all together, though that's clearly an ambitious task for so small a studio. But hey, we'll gladly grab the free version and see how it all works out...

FOR FANS OF: NOBY NOBY BOY, SCRIBBLENAUTS, LITTLEBIGPLANET



FLOWER

DEVELOPER: HONEYSUGAR DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

It should come as little surprise that this is brought to you by the team behind Vita freebie *Frobisher Says*, since both are utterly bonkers. This is not your traditional game in terms of structure or objectives. It's a little like *Journey* in that respect, actually, albeit an odd cousin to it that can't stop throwing back hallucinogens.

FOR FANS OF: NOBY NOBY BOY, SOUND SHAPES, SNAKE



N++

DEVELOPER: METANET DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

Hardcore platforming fans, welcome home. *Cloudberry Kingdom* may have been a bit of a disappointment but this will be nothing of the sort – punishing level design like you've never seen before, seemingly impossible challenges to overcome, some of the most devious co-op trials in gaming history... this game is out to break you.

FOR FANS OF: CLODBERRY KINGDOM, SUPER MEAT BOY, RAYMAN LEGENDS



FLOWER

DEVELOPER: THATGAMECOMPANY DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

If you don't know about *Flower* already then shame on you – it's one of the most inventive and oddly involving games on PSN. Indie studio thatgamecompany managed to make a pseudo-platformer where you play as the wind itself, breezing through patches of blossoms to carry petals to the next, pollinating them to bring colour back to the world. It's such a breath of fresh air after two and a half billion versions of *Shooty War Man* and we can't wait to play an even prettier rendition.

FOR FANS OF: FLOW, JOURNEY, AQUANAUT'S HOLIDAY



MINECRAFT

DEVELOPER: 4J STUDIOS DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

Yeah, it's finally happening. The way Sony just sort of threw away the announcement at gamescom after Microsoft has made such a big deal about having it at every opportunity was hilarious, though we're certainly glad the game is coming at last. As, we're sure, are the millions of *Minecraft*'s loyal fans.

FOR FANS OF: TERRARIA, LITTLEBIGPLANET, DISNEY INFINITY'S TOY BOX MODE



DIVEKICK

DEVELOPER: IRON GALAXY DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

It started as a joke but now, somehow, it's a real thing. *Divekick* is a 'fighter' that uses two buttons, Dive (jump) and Kick. But with each character having slightly different trajectories on their dives and various power-up effects, it's about positioning, mind games and psyching out your opponent and forcing a mistake.

FOR FANS OF: SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV, DISPOSABLE GAMING



BASEMENT CRAWL

DEVELOPER: BLOOPER TEAM

DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

Seems like this grimy launch title from Bloober will be a single-screen competitive maze game – imagine *Bomberman* but with the character depth and variety of MOBAs like *League Of Legends* and you're on the right track. There's definitely a gap in that market too, as the last decent *Bomberman* game was years ago. Speaking of which... Hudson, if you happy to be reading this, *Bomberman* on PS4. Do it. Do it right now.

FOR FANS OF: BOMBERMAN, FAT PRINCESS, THE BINDING OF ISAAC



BLACKLIGHT: RETRIBUTION

DEVELOPER: ZOMBIE GAMES

DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

Given that the PS4 launches with the two biggest shooters on the planet alongside it, we have to wonder who's actually going to bother with this free-to-play alternative. Not that having more games or getting them for free can ever really be a bad thing we suppose, plus there's still an outside chance that this could turn out to be awesome. But even if it is, it's likely that most of the world will be too busy playing *COD* to notice...

FOR FANS OF: PLANETSIDE 2, CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS, DUST 514



CONTRAST

DEVELOPER: COMPULSION GAMES

DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

Taking cues from the likes of *Limbo*, *Black Knight Sword* and *Puppeteer*, *Contrast* is a stylish and creative platformer where the heroine can transition between leaping around in the real world and becoming one with the shadows. The old-fashioned visual theme is neat and a little bit *BioShock*-esque, helping establish *Contrast* as one of the real launch line-up standouts from a creativity perspective.

FOR FANS OF: LIMBO, BRAID, JOURNEY



KNACK

DEVELOPER: SONY DIGITAL/BOXED: BOTH

We've played it a couple of times now but we're still not entirely sure what to make of *Knack*. It's harmless enough and sort of enjoyable, but there just doesn't seem to be much to it from what we've seen, though that could of course just be a poor choice of demo sections on Sony's part. Despite the ability to grow absolutely huge and shrink way small, there's very little change in terms of gameplay based on how big you are – enemies just seem to match your size for the most part, meaning the basic rhythm of slapping the controller until you win never lets up. We do like *Knack*'s voice, though, so we guess that's something.

FOR FANS OF: JAK & DAXTER, KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER, WE LOVE KATAMARI

LEGO MARVEL SUPER HEROES

DEVELOPER: TT GAMES **DIGITAL/BOXED:** BOTH
We can't imagine anybody will be rushing out to buy a Lego game to show off the vast power of PlayStation 4 but, as secondary pick-ups go, the series' track record of being great value for money will make this a decent choice for anyone coming onto the console scene fresh for PS4. You know what to expect by now – loads of characters, several billion studs to collect and all kinds of cool powers and abilities to use and abuse. The Marvel cast is perhaps even better suited to the template than any that has come before, so we're really looking forward to seeing what kind of super-powered craziness ensues. Just imagine how many bricks you'd need to make Lego Galactus...

FOR FANS OF: LEGO BATMAN 2, AVENGERS ASSEMBLE, SPIDER-MAN 2



MADDEN NFL 25

DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS **DIGITAL/BOXED:** BOTH

It's already out on PS3 so chances are if you're a big enough fan to pick up EA's latest American Football title at all, you'll already be pretty much done with it by the time the next-gen version hits. That said, there's ample reason to hold out, if only to see what visual delights the all-new Ignite engine can deliver. *FIFA* looks silly good on PS4, so we can only assume that *Madden* – which is by far the bigger game for EA due to the huge US following – will follow suit. Not that we'll ever play it, mind.

FOR FANS OF: BALLS THAT AREN'T ROUND, INTENTIONALLY GETTING THE RULES OF RUGBY WRONG



NBA LIVE 14

DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS **DIGITAL/BOXED:** BOTH
EA has been trampling Konami for years (and often unfairly) in the footie business, so it was actually quite refreshing to see the digital sports giant's basketball sim benched back in 2009 after constantly falling short of 2K's games. A comeback was planned for last year but was cancelled late in development. But with the technological leap to next-gen, the time is right for another speculative three-point effort from downtown to get EA back in the game. We do hope it comes good, too – competition between franchises is only good news for gamers at the end of the day.

FOR FANS OF: BASKETBALL GAMES THAT USED TO COME OUT EVERY YEAR BUT HAVEN'T FOR A WHILE



△OX□ This is EA's best chance to get back in the basketball game in years. Don't bottle it...



△×□ It still feels like a Criterion racer, so hopes are high that *Rivals* will have the quality to match.

NEED FOR SPEED: RIVALS

DEVELOPER: GHOST GAMES **DIGITAL/BOXED:** BOTH

Neither Criterion or *The Run's* Black Box are behind the wheel of this latest EA racer, rather a new and relatively unknown Swedish studio. Should we be worried about this? Hardly – EA has shipped out Criterion's Craig Sullivan to make sure the new guys are getting it right and, based on what we've seen and played so far, they sure seem to be. Returning to *Hot Pursuit's* central feature of letting players choose between racers and cops, *Rivals* takes things a few steps further with more gadgets and vehicles plus different progression systems for each faction. Add an improved Autolog and blurred solo/multiplayer lines thanks to the new AllDrive system and you've got the recipe for an awesome arcade racer, just as the series usually delivers. Hurrah.

FOR FANS OF: BURNOUT PARADISE, NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT, DIRT SHOWDOWN

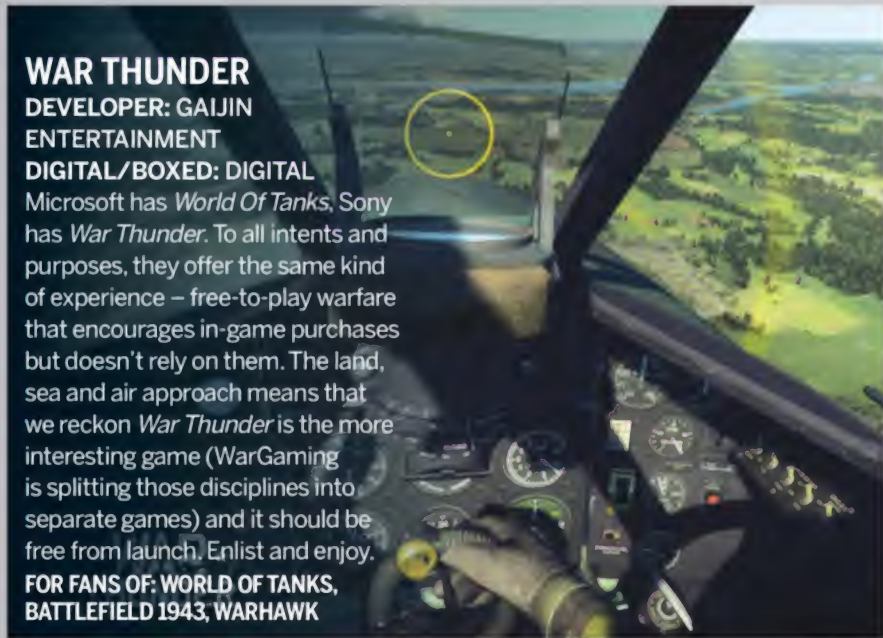
WAR THUNDER

DEVELOPER: GAIJIN ENTERTAINMENT

DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

Microsoft has *World Of Tanks*, Sony has *War Thunder*. To all intents and purposes, they offer the same kind of experience – free-to-play warfare that encourages in-game purchases but doesn't rely on them. The land, sea and air approach means that we reckon *War Thunder* is the more interesting game (WarGaming is splitting those disciplines into separate games) and it should be free from launch. Enlist and enjoy.

FOR FANS OF: WORLD OF TANKS, BATTLEFIELD 1943, WARHAWK



WARFRAME

DEVELOPER: DIGITAL EXTREMES

DIGITAL/BOXED: DIGITAL

Cooperative loot grinding has become one of our favourite pastimes this generation thanks to *Borderlands 2* and *Diablo III*, so this free-to-play game by storied shooter team Digital Extremes is very much on our radar. It might not quite look the part for a next-gen game but we're hoping that the scope and social integration make up for it.

FOR FANS OF: BORDERLANDS, DIABLO III, NINJA GAIDEN 3'S CO-OP





NBA 2K14

DEVELOPER: 2K GAMES **DIGITAL/BOXED:** BOTH

Ask any proper basketball fan whether 2K or EA put out the better digital recreations and, if our experience is anything to go by, the majority of them will point you this way. Reworked controls made last year's offering the best in ages, even if Jay-Z's role as producer on the game did just seem to mean that he filled the soundtrack with a bunch of his terrible songs. It looks like that little kink has been ironed out this year, though, leaving what should be a slick, authentic and visually stunning rendition of that sport where the ball is only a tiny bit smaller than the hole it's supposed to go in. No, not golf. The other one.

FOR FANS OF: BASKETBALL GAMES THAT COME OUT EVERY YEAR AND ARE DAMN GOOD



SKYLANDERS: SWAP FORCE

DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS **DIGITAL/BOXED:** BOXED

Since you're going to have to get a new Portal Of Power to make the Swap Force figures work anyway, you might as well plump for the PS4 version, right? Right. The new engine looks great on PS3 but downright amazing on next-gen hardware, bringing the toys to life like never before. And that's just the start of it – tighter control (you can actually jump now!), a higher level cap and those all-important interchangeable character parts stand to make this the best *Skylanders* yet. And we only just got *Disney Infinity*. Man, this year is going to be expensive...

FOR FANS OF: DISNEY INFINITY, POKÉMON, LEGO GAMES



COUNTERSPY

DEVELOPER: DYNAMIGHTY DIGITAL **BOXED:** DIGITAL

Another indie side-scroller, this time a stylised stealth game not unlike Klei's awesome *Mark Of The Ninja*. The angular, block-colour visuals are striking indeed and, even if you're not planning on getting a PS4 right away, you'll still be able to play this little oddity – it's coming to PS3 and Vita as well.

FOR FANS OF: STEALTH INC, SHADOW COMPLEX, ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE



DC UNIVERSE ONLINE

DEVELOPER: SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT **DIGITAL/BOXED:** DIGITAL

We've been far too busy with *FFXIV* to venture back to Metropolis or Gotham recently, but this could be the incentive we need. It's now up to its eighth set of DLC, with loads of new raids, instances and power sets for new characters so if you hit the level cap and gave up not long after, there's plenty of new stuff to do these days.

FOR FANS OF: WORLD OF WARCRAFT, MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE, INFINITE CRISIS



PINBALL ARCADE

DEVELOPER: FARSIGHT STUDIOS **DIGITAL/BOXED:** DIGITAL

It's a pinball game. For PlayStation 4. The ball will be even shinier. That's probably about it. But hey, if that's all you want from a game – big ol' shiny balls – then welcome to your ultimate videogame.

FOR FANS OF: ZEN PINBALL, TRUE PINBALL, ACTUAL PINBALL

THE ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE



As if Skyrim wasn't big enough...

ETA 2014 | DEV ZENIMAX ONLINE STUDIOS | PUB BETHESDA SOFTWORKS



It's a bad time to be an upcoming console MMO. Sony has announced *EverQuest Next*, an ambitious title with huge scope for customisation that is sure to come to PS4. Square has just released *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*, vastly improved from the shambolic original and *DC Universe Online* continues to perform strongly since going free-to-play. With a relatively crowded landscape for what is still a small genre on console, where exactly does *The Elder Scrolls Online* fit in?

Skyrim is a name instantly recognisable to gamers around the world, but overall series *The Elder Scrolls* and the lore behind it is a little more obscure. *TESO* is going to need more than just brand recognition to survive.

Set 1,000 years before *Skyrim*, *TESO* encompasses the entire continent of Tamriel, including every land seen in a previous *Elder Scrolls* game – *Skyrim*, *Cyrodill*, *Morrowind*, *Daggerfall* and more, as well as plenty of areas never seen before. For the first time, players can grasp the huge scale of a world they have only seen in parts. Areas will be locked off until later expansions and patches, but the aim of developer ZeniMax Online Studios is to eventually have the entirety of Tamriel available.

Every race is playable, aside from Imperials – Talos is yet to be born at this point in the timeline, so the Third Empire is yet to be founded. Otherwise, you can be whoever you want – a hairy Nord, a reptilian Argonian or a feline Khajiit being three of many choices. Character customisation has been greatly expanded from *Skyrim*, with a wealth of sliders and variables making it easier to not be a really ugly bastard.

Races fall into one of three factions, because a fantasy MMO without war is like a car without wheels. The Second Empire lies in ruins, and the position of ruler is up for grabs for whoever has

the strength to take it. Sure, we all know how it turns out in the end, but it's the taking part that counts! PVP is set to be a huge part of the game, with all three factions battling at once to take control of Cyrodill, the Imperial City and ultimately the throne. Successful factions may even see their top player crowned Emperor. Destroying and holding keeps will be a feature, and apparently siege weapons will be able to realistically destroy walls and gates. Plenty of MMOs have promised epic wars with environment destruction and long-term consequences, but none have ever managed to put every piece together into a reality. *The Elder Scrolls Online* has the lore behind it to create some truly epic PVP moments.

First revealed as a third-person title that seemed to have more in common with *World Of Warcraft* than the games it follows, *TESO* has changed considerably since its reveal last year. What we are presented with now is much more reminiscent of an *Elder Scrolls* game, with a first-person viewpoint and the signature 'left to block, right to attack' controls. Third-person is still available if you want it, but any *Elder Scrolls* fan will rightly tell you that first-person is the only way to play.

Most MMOs thrive from a feeling of exploring the unknown, setting foot into this brave new world and discovering its secrets. Obviously that still exists here to a degree, but the world of Tamriel is a known quantity, and series fans will find huge pleasure in revisiting famous landmarks that they already know.

Of course, this is still a vastly different game to *Oblivion* and *Skyrim*. Movement and combat feel lighter, with less precise collision detection that MMO fans will be used to. Characters can eventually level every skill and ability, but doing so takes time – for example, the choice to equip a different weapon, and with it a new set of skills, is

unlocked at level 15. Players who want to master everything they can will have to be in it for the long haul.

A big stumbling point for many MMOs in coming to console is the traditional 12-key hotbar that most examples of the genre use. It's simply too many buttons to map to a controller, and the few successful MMOs on console have all experimented with having fewer spells and attacks accessible at one time. ZeniMax's approach seems similar. Players will build up a wide variety of abilities, but only a handful will be useable in particular instances. The choice is, of course, up to the player, and skill selection should ensure a huge variety of playstyles, even among seemingly identical classes.

Ongoing war aside, the main storyline of the game concerns Daedric Prince Molag Bal as he attempts to pull all of Tamriel into his realm of Coldharbour. This guy is a bad dude – if everyone could stop fighting for just five minutes and take care of him, the collective population would probably be grateful.

There are plenty of side quests and other assorted bits of nonsense to take up your time, and players can go from fighting off demonic hellspawn to helping a girl and her friends who have been turned into rats after messing about with an enchanted staff. It's all standard MMO stuff, a steady trail of quests leading you from one area to the next without being too obvious.

That's what *The Elder Scrolls Online* is when you remove the series trappings it drapes itself in: a standard MMO. It's shaping up to be a good one, perhaps even a great one, but to stand out amid the crowded line-up of online games on PS4, it's going to need to be special. The choice of a subscription in a world of free-to-play is interesting, perhaps showing how much confidence Bethesda has in its new project.

Ultimately, *Elder Scrolls* fans have been on board since day one – it's ZeniMax's job to get everyone else interested too. ▶

The Elder Scrolls Online is being developed by ZeniMax Online Studios. Check the website for more details: www.elderscrollsonline.com



△OX□ If the map size isn't at least 400 times that of *Skyrim* we'll be very disappointed.

What makes this game great?

△ All the worlds you remember from past games, together at last.

○ Classic Elder Scrolls gameplay transformed for the MMO genre.

✕ Discover the history of Tamriel through a suitably epic quest line.

□ Huge PVP battles between three different factions.

TALKING TAMRIEL

We chat to PVP designer **Brian Wheeler** about his time working on *The Elder Scrolls Online*

When did you start working on *The Elder Scrolls Online*?

I think it was around 2006 and I joined the company in 2009, so it's been cooking away for a while.

What stage was the game at when you came on board?

They didn't have any PVP aspects yet so they asked me to build it! They had just started getting some of the zones fleshed out, getting them playable in the game. Starting to work on the feel of the game rather than just making it functional. The wheels were starting to roll.

How difficult was it to create PVP in a series like *The Elder Scrolls*? Were there fan expectations?

Absolutely. It was tough when we were first going through the discussions of which zones would be PVP. We knew Cyrodiil would be part of it because, if you look at the timeline, this period says "civil war". That's all it says. So we were like, okay, Imperial City, let's get started from there. It kind of grew out of that, Imperial City was too small and we wanted larger fights so we pulled out into Cyrodiil itself while making sure what we were doing

was okay with Bethesda. And they said sure, it's 700 years before *Oblivion* so we have some freedom. So the topography is all the same – same terrain. We took landmarks and did different things with them. Various broken ruins in *Oblivion* are full castles in our game. It was fun to look at the map and work out how to take *Oblivion* and work it into a PVP game.

Were there challenges from the combat side?

Making sure keeps worked, the space and how big they are. Keeps are large so there can be lots of movement. They aren't vertical; they stay pretty flat to make sure that it's not a layered fight. We left it open, but you blow up parts of the walls and keeps to get inside.

Is part of the design remit making sure the game is accessible to people whose first experience with the series was *Skyrim*?

A lot of the influence behind why we made *TESO* was because you'd see your friends online playing *Oblivion* and *Skyrim* and you couldn't play with them. So we should make an online version but keep it familiar... if you've played an *Elder Scrolls* game, our goal is to make this one feel familiar.

How do the traditional PC MMO controls translate to a console pad?

The mouse control movement translates really well to the thumbsticks. When it comes to the activation of skills, we are debating whether to use face buttons or something else, but there are people back at the studio who have used third-party programs and mapped the PC version to a pad and played it. We are still nailing down the control scheme but it

plays just fine. The regular *Oblivion*-style combat of left block, right attack is what we are looking at for a starting point but there's a lot of tweaking still to go. It's going to feel great.

What has changed in the industry to make console MMOs more frequent?

I think when developers started experimenting with having fewer buttons on the hotbar. At level 15 in *TESO* you can swap your weapons and get another bar that replaces the first. That has helped a lot with mapping keys and such. Most MMOs have the traditional ten slots and mapping ten hotkeys to a pad is hard. With your abilities in *TESO*, you build them up and collect a load then choose which five or six you want to use in play at any one time. We could be the same class but you could be in heavy armour and I in light, we could have different abilities on our bar and that could drastically affect how each one of us plays.

Do you think the console audience is ready for MMOs?

I think so, especially for *TESO*. It plays like *Skyrim* so it's going to be familiar to them. Same controls, same world, same look and feel. It's going to be more perceived as a good RPG and a good *TES* game that you get to play with your buddies than a good MMO.

Is there any difficulty implementing things like certification, patches and updates on console?

Certification is difficult, especially for two consoles! We plan on making sure everyone has the same experience, regardless of platform. We don't want to compromise for any platform. The game is the game.

When *Skyrim* was such a hit, did that affect development of *TESO*?

Sure, we looked at *Skyrim* and took some cues from it, *Oblivion* as well. Some things we have unfortunately not been able to do like dragons (they didn't exist at that point in the timeline). But we took a lot from *Skyrim*, especially regarding the Elder Scrolls. If I recall, that was the first game where you could actually obtain an Elder Scroll. So we've used that so in PVP – a goal is to take an Elder Scroll from your enemy. The things we are allowed to do with the world and the IP are always growing.


What do you see as the main differences between *Oblivion* and its successor *Skyrim*?

The combat was different, right and left triggers did different things. We looked at those, whether we would do dual magic or sword and board. That turned into us wanting everyone to use anything, so you needed to be able to block with a staff. So we went with the universal left and right, block and attack mechanics.

What are the expectations for *TESO* in regards to success? Is it expected to match *Skyrim*?

For us as developers, our expectation is to have a very good *Elder Scrolls* game that people love and play for a long time. I work on it, so I want a very good game!

Could this be a gateway title for MMO on console?

That would be awesome if we did lead the way, and very humbling at the same time. To be one of the guys that helped make an *Elder Scrolls* game that helped spearhead MMOs to become popular on console. That would be awesome. 



THE DAGGERFALL COVENANT

The human races of Breton and Redguard have grouped together with the wandering Orcs to form the Daggerfall Covenant in an attempt to restore the Second Empire and bring peace back to war-torn Tamriel.

**THE ALDMERI DOMINION**

Composed of the three races of southern Tamriel, The Aldmeri Dominion includes the mysterious Wood Elves and the feline Khajiit as well as its leaders, the High Elves of the Summerset Isles. Fighting to stop the dangerous advance of humankind, the Aldmeri want to restore the ancient status quo of Elven rule in Tamriel.



SKYRIM

HIGH
ROCK

HAMMERFELL

CYRODIIL

ELSWEYR

VALENWOOD

MORROWIND

BLACK
MARSH**CAN'T WE JUST BE FRIENDS?**

Players can choose from nine races when creating their character in The Elder Scrolls Online, each a member of one of three factions. So what are your options?

THE EBONHEART PACT

The most tenuous of the three alliances, made up of three races that were formerly enemies. The Nords of Skyrim, Dark Elves of Morrowind and reptilian Argonians have banded together to fight for their own autonomy after eras of Imperial control.



DEEP DOWN

We can be happy underground

ETA 2014 | DEV CAPCOM | PUB CAPCOM



Imagine *Dark Souls*. Got it? Good. Now imagine it was made by Capcom and a PS4 exclusive and you've pretty much got *Deep Down*. We recently saw some gameplay for the first time and are now suitably excited. Automatically generated online dungeons full of nasty beasts that want to eat your face – sounds like our cup of tea.

Gameplay seems similar to *Dark Souls*, with players battling in third-person and damage appearing above monsters when you hit them. Despite the medieval fantasy setting, the game takes place in 2094 in New York. Your character will 'read' the memories from past artifacts and

monuments, going back in time to play through the events that occurred. Sounds familiar, eh?

The premise might sound like a bit of an *Assassin's Creed* rip-off, but the gameplay and the dark fantasy setting look so great that we don't care. The concept of procedurally generated dungeons really gets our jaws slaving, as if it works then it essentially means the game will never end.

It also looks beautiful from a graphics standpoint, a battle with a dragon showing off a huge explosion of different particle effects that combine into something truly jaw-dropping. Capcom's new Panta Rhei engine, created explicitly to take advantage

of next-gen, seems to be doing just that. Dungeons are dark and grimy, armour realistic and understated, monsters gruesome and slimy. Yes, it sounds like *Dark Souls*, but we really like *Dark Souls*.

Deep Down is also apparently a PS4 exclusive. It's welcome news, if surprising considering the fact it's published by a third party. That's all we know for now, but with the game playable for the first time at TGS, we expect to have plenty more information very soon. Until then, this is definitely one to keep an eye on. **ΔOX□**

Deep Down is being developed by Capcom. Check the website for more details: uk.playstation.com/deep-down

ΔOX□ READ ME Fight through procedurally generated dungeons with friends in a dark fantasy setting more than a bit reminiscent of *Dark Souls*. **ΔOX□ΔOX□**

What makes this game great?



It looks a lot like *Dark Souls*. We like *Dark Souls*.



Beautiful, properly next-gen graphics.



You can fight against dragons. BLOODY GREAT DRAGONS.



Randomly generated dungeons (and enemies) means the game never ends.

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MAD MAX



The road warrior roars onto PlayStation 4

ETA 2014 | DEV AVALANCHE STUDIOS | PUB WARNER BROS



It seems incredibly bizarre that it's taken well over 30 years and a handful of console generations for someone to finally realise that a *Mad Max* game is a good idea. Yes, we are aware that the titular character did make his console debut back in 1990 on the NES in the admirably awful *Mad Max*, which culled its set-up, not from the first film – despite the misdirection of the title – but from the brilliantly bonkers sequel that George Miller and Mel Gibson delivered with ultra-violent aplomb to the masses back in 1981. But let's face it, how can a developer emulate a vast world such as that with the restrictions of the 8-bit era?

Enter Warner Bros and Avalanche, the mad geniuses behind the *Just Cause* series, who have cooked up an enormously gorgeous-looking open world for players to act out the violent fantasies of, well, a mad man. Pegged for release on PS3 and PS4 early in 2014, the game's narrative is simplistic in approach and straight to the point: Max is stranded in the desert after his four-wheeled monster, the Ford Interceptor, has been stolen and he's been left for dead in the searing heat. Enter Chumbucket, an equally unstable individual who helps Max assemble a brand new killing machine, the Magnum Opus, so Max can exact revenge and get his wheels back.

"I think it's quite a big part of the story, particularly to begin with," explains lead level designer on *Mad Max*, Andreas Gschwari. "Essentially Max starts the game on foot, which is not a good thing in the wasteland. You want transport, you want a vehicle otherwise you might end up dead very quickly. It's a very big part of that actual story, to build that Magnum Opus. The player comes across

Chumbucket who helps him to build that car. Max lives from moment to moment, he doesn't really make long-term goals, and his aim is to survive and to find some sort of peace and solitude. In order to do that he needs a car." We weren't lying when we said this was bare-bones stuff. Still, we can't help but think that Avalanche is keeping the bigger picture to itself for now, what with the game so far away from spinning in our consoles.

Having already laid eyes on Max in Los Angeles at E3 earlier in the year, we couldn't help but notice a (welcome) alteration that, according to the studio, was implemented as a result of fan feedback – the American accent is no more, and in its place remains the correct brogue – an Australian one – much more akin to Gibson's chatter in the flicks. Interestingly for Avalanche, the studio has opted not to build a game centred around the impending release of the new film, *Fury Road*, which is slated for release around the same time as the game, instead opting to build a fresh *Max* experience from the ground up; albeit one in the very same universe as Miller's. "It is a standalone experience," says Emil Kraftling, the game's senior designer. "From the get-go that's how we wanted it, because movie tie-in games tend to be quite bad, and we really wanted to be wary of heading there. We wanted to create the game with a game experience as the primary focus, and we want core gamers to be able to enjoy this game. We want to enjoy the game ourselves. We want to make a game that we want to play."

Smart move then, but that's not to say *Max* won't feature the company's unique brand of chaos, despite the constraints of working with an established IP. ▶

What makes this game great?

△ It's the *Mad Max* game that fans of the series have been waiting 30 years to play.

○ Vehicular combat is fast, furious and incredibly stylish.

✕ Avalanche has taken a leaf out of Rocksteady's book with the fluid combat system.

□ Max's voice has been recast from American to Australian.

And while the hand-to-hand combat offers plenty of bone-crunching moments, it's the vehicular battles that really stand out; rightly so, considering the developer's pedigree and Max's celluloid history. With no auto-aim, moments behind the wheel offer options aplenty, with a quick mode target system for Max's harpoon gun and shotgun that allows you to lock onto the nearest target's weak spot and take them out in quick succession. And for the more cinematic moments, there's a slow-mo mode that lets you pull off elaborate takedowns at high speeds, such as harpooning an enemy's door, ripping it clean off and peppering his face with shotgun pellets. Yeah. Ouch.

Although it was still only in the pre-alpha stages, *Mad Max* was running on PlayStation 4 and looked very easy on the eye, with the myriad gameplay styles blending seamlessly together for what certainly looks to be one of the more interesting titles of 2014, despite the E3 grilling the game and developers took. The only questions that remain unanswered for **Play** are whether or not we'll get to experience the Thunderdome, and will Tina Turner make an appearance? [AOX](#)

Mad Max is being developed by Avalanche Studios. Check out the website for more details: www.madmaxgame.com



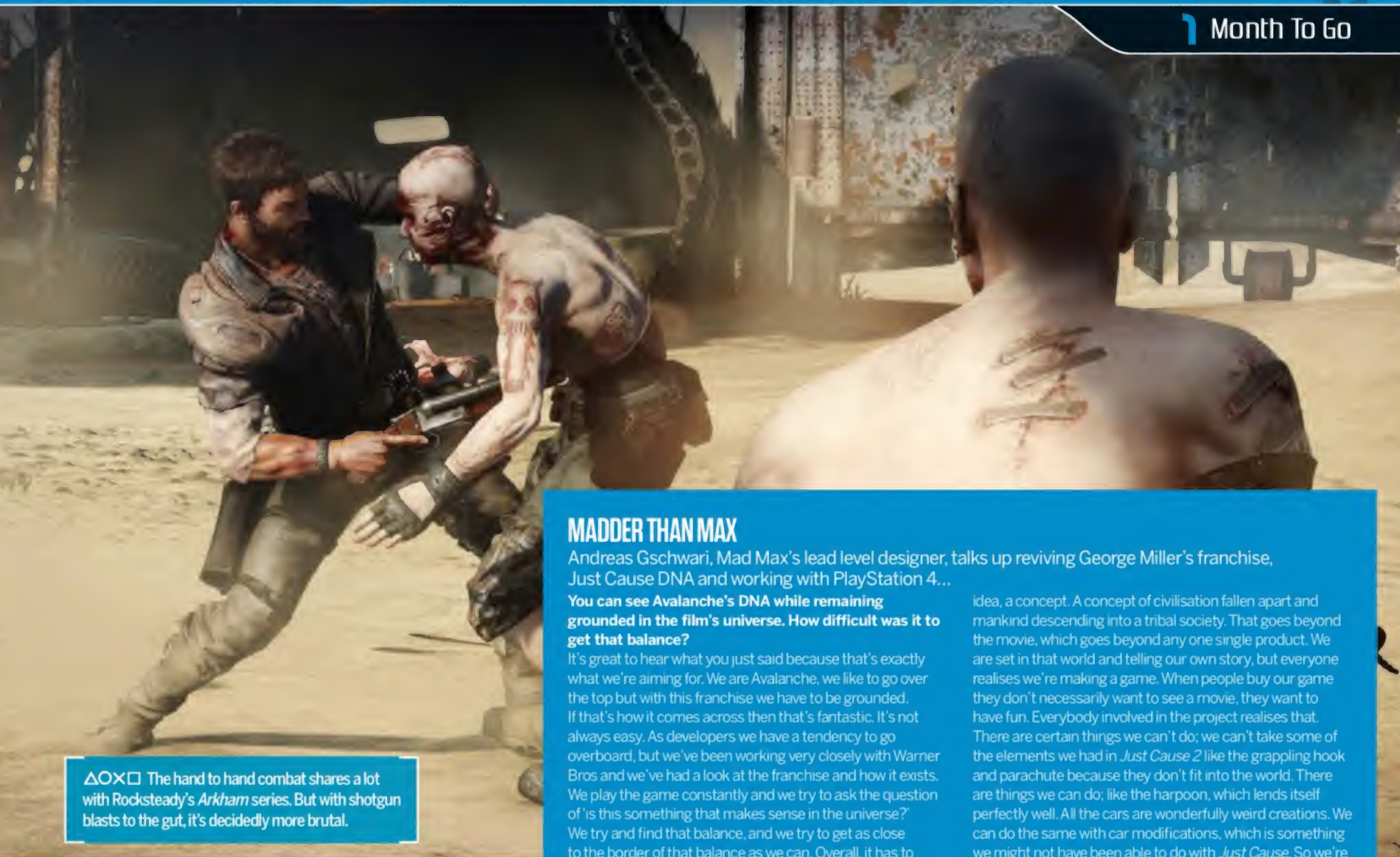
READ ME *Mad Max* sees Max left for dead in the wasteland and thirsty for revenge after his iconic Ford Interceptor is taken from him.

Murder behind the wheel

At the outset of the game you'll meet the ridiculously named Chumbucket, a desert loon who assists you in the building of Max's Magnum Opus, a supercharged car to rival even the iconic Ford Interceptor, which has been stolen from you. While it starts out as a rickety four-wheeled wagon, you'll be able to kit it out with all sorts of nifty hardware, including enhancing its ramming abilities and tricking out the engine, mounted sniper rifle and harpoon gun.



**ΔOX□ Even behind the wheel of the
Magnum Opus, Max isn't safe.**



△○×□ The hand to hand combat shares a lot with Rocksteady's *Arkham* series. But with shotgun blasts to the gut, it's decidedly more brutal.



MADDER THAN MAX

Andreas Gschwari, Mad Max's lead level designer, talks up reviving George Miller's franchise, Just Cause DNA and working with PlayStation 4...

You can see Avalanche's DNA while remaining grounded in the film's universe. How difficult was it to get that balance?

It's great to hear what you just said because that's exactly what we're aiming for. We are Avalanche, we like to go over the top but with this franchise we have to be grounded. If that's how it comes across then that's fantastic. It's not always easy. As developers we have a tendency to go overboard, but we've been working very closely with Warner Bros and we've had a look at the franchise and how it exists. We play the game constantly and we try to ask the question of 'is this something that makes sense in the universe?' We try and find that balance, and we try to get as close to the border of that balance as we can. Overall, it has to be grounded, it has to be a good story and it has to fit the universe, but at the same time it's a game and we want to make sure that fans of the franchise and fans of us alike will have a good time and an enjoyable experience.

Has there been any involvement from George Miller?

I don't think you can do a game in the franchise without having contact with George Miller. We obviously consulted with him very early in the game's stages, especially when it came to the tone and art direction.

How did you feel about the bad reaction to the American voice?

Whenever you make a game there's always some things like that. You think you're doing everything. We play the game every day and we hear the voice everyday so for us it's natural and it becomes second nature. When we announced it at E3 there was quite a lot of Australian press and fans there, and they loved the fact we were doing the franchise but they started this petition because of the American accent. To see that fan reaction that early in the development process, we were happy to listen to our fans and change the voice accordingly. In the grand scheme of things it's not really a big ask. If we have this many dedicated fans this early in development, who are we to say no to them?

Is it a new actor or the original one putting on an Aussie accent?

That would've been the easy solution, but at Avalanche we're not really known for taking the easy solution, and with a publishing partner like Warner Bros we can't go for that. It's the quality that counts. We absolutely hired a new voice actor. It was a bit of a scrap to get it all together for gamescom, but we did it.

Were there any restrictions handling an existing property rather than a new IP?

Warner Bros recognises the strength that Avalanche brings to the table. Yes, it is a franchise, it's an established universe, but that's what it is. *Mad Max* isn't just the movies; it's an

idea, a concept. A concept of civilisation fallen apart and mankind descending into a tribal society. That goes beyond the movie, which goes beyond any one single product. We are set in that world and telling our own story, but everyone realises we're making a game. When people buy our game they don't necessarily want to see a movie, they want to have fun. Everybody involved in the project realises that. There are certain things we can't do; we can't take some of the elements we had in *Just Cause 2* like the grappling hook and parachute because they don't fit into the world. There are things we can do; like the harpoon, which lends itself perfectly well. All the cars are wonderfully weird creations. We can do the same with car modifications, which is something we might not have been able to do with *Just Cause*. So we're losing some elements from other games that we've done but we're inventing new ones.

What does the next-gen engine enable you to do?

From that point of view our core philosophy is to get the gameplay right. It has to be fun. It has to make sense. We create what we think is a fun gameplay experience and then we craft gameplay density. We want to make sure the player always has something to do. There's always something on the horizon enticing you to go over there and explore it. If we find that we've got enough of that then we'll stop doing well. We want to see more, we want to do more and we have so much more content that needs to go in. Avalanche games don't really determine the size until very close until we're done, because the way we build our games is an organic process. We build from the inner core outwards and build the land around it as we need it.

Fury Road with Tom Hardy is currently in production. Will the two come out around the same time?

I don't actually know the release schedule. We haven't set a date yet, but we know we're coming out in 2014. I don't really know the release date for the film. In terms of us being linked to it, we're completely separate productions. We don't have anything to do with the film at all.

Is there not a marketing angle to exploit by releasing both the game and the film around the same time?

As a developer we don't really know about this. It's all about finding a good slot for when other games are coming out and all that. That's what a good publisher is for.

So was it a coincidence that both productions fell in tandem with each other?

I don't know, to be honest. They are both done by Warner Bros so maybe they were thinking of developing both at the same time. But it's very hard to coordinate these things. I don't think it was ever planned that we would come out within the same time frame. I think it's more about the revival of the franchise in general.

Kept you waiting, huh?



ETA 2014 | DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS | PUB KONAMI



At the recent Tokyo Games Show, Kojima demoed 12 minutes of new

From there, he scales the fence and begins calculating his approach. The goal? Rescuing a detainee without being spotted by any of the heavily armed resistance. So far, it sounds like a mission from any number of stealth games, but

From there, Snake finds his detainee and moves to get him to relative safety. This opens up a new and very clever feature that is an absolute godsend

Metal Gear Solid V is shaping up oh-so-nicely. It's one of the first PS4 games to really look like the future, and Kojima's esoteric charms have most certainly been missed. Five years too long. △○×□

Metal Gear Solid V is being developed by Konami and Kojima Productions. Check the website at www.metalgearsolid.com

READ ME Kojima took to the stage at this year's TGS to show off more *Metal Gear Solid V*. Read how the open world changes the action in his most ambitious game yet.



ΔΟΧ□ *Ground Zeroes* is supposed to ease players into open-world stealth before *The Phantom Pain* blows their minds.

△OX□ We'll miss the radar and the vision cones it offered, but the *Far Cry 3* approach to marking targets is also a proven success.

CQC QTE

Demystifying the Metal Gear controls

For a series that's long been drenched in detail, *Metal Gear Solid* has often been quite difficult to play. Part of this comes from its heritage – developers were still figuring out the best way to actually make things happen with a controller. Part comes from Kojima's keenness to slightly confuse the player at all times – giving them a huge tool box, but making everything look like a hammer.

With *Metal Gear Solid V*, though, control is back firmly in the grasp of the player. Grabbing hold of an enemy brings up a smooth and connected series of button prompts so you can execute exactly what you want with minimal fuss. Some may bemoan the lack of complexity but, after hours of accidentally snapping guards' necks instead of choking them to sleep in the previous games, we'd argue that it's probably for the best.

What makes this game great?

△ The new Fox engine lends Kojima's world gorgeous visuals and malleable physics.

○ The move to an open world makes *MGSV* take a different approach to stealth.

✕ It's actually been over five years since a full *Metal Gear Solid* game appeared.

□ With this being an open world, Snake can commandeer vehicles.

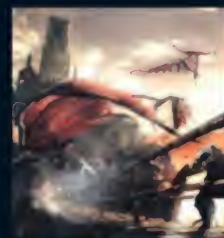


△OX□ As much as we love the guy, subtlety isn't exactly Kojima's strong suit. Expect ham-fisted visual metaphors aplenty.

Install

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

Need To Know



Dark Souls II release date confirmed
Namco Bandai confirmed the release date of eagerly anticipated flagellation simulator *Dark Souls II* at TGS. The still-current-gen follow-up to the marvellous but somewhat inaccessible original is due to hit on 14 March. Prepare to die.



Deep Down's gameplay looks awesome, but we're still not sure a free-to-play model is right for it...

PS4: ALL QUIET ON THE EASTERN FRONT

It was once the greatest show on Earth. Now, Tokyo Games Show feels like an afterthought...

IN THE NINETIES heyday of the PlayStation and the Nintendo 64 rivalry, the annual Tokyo Games Show was a sight to behold. This is where the games were announced, where the key interviews happened, where the press and the gaming hardcore dreamed of visiting.

Fast forward to 2013 and the entire affair is little more than a shadow of its former self. A smattering of announcements helped to lift the mood a little – a new *Gravity Rush* and the new game from Grasshopper and Suda 51 – but it was hard to shake the notion that the Japanese videogame market is not at all what it once was, especially in the 'big game' space.

The centre point for TGS this year was a tepid keynote from Sony that reflected the fact that – amazingly – PS4 isn't coming out in its home territory until next year. If that's

not a damning indictment of what's going on in Japan then what is? Still, Sony exhibited a sizeable booth at the show (held outside Tokyo, incidentally, at the Makuhari Messe) and did reveal some interesting information about the impending next-gen launch, but the whole affair was underwhelming.

Some interesting information to come out of the keynote surrounded the PS4's capability to be used as a mobile games server and the connectivity possible with the new PlayStation app for phones. It's another great piece of functionality that further increases the reach of a console that's rapidly becoming an ever-broadening box of tricks, but not exactly the *Last Guardian*-style megaton many had hoped for. This was Sony's last chance to talk before the console comes out, yet there's never been less enthusiasm.

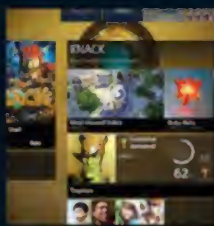
In truth, it makes sense that Sony wouldn't hold back much killer information for its TGS showcase. The way these keynotes are consumed and reported on has changed significantly in the past few years. Where once a corporation would rely on the world's press to get the message out there, now it can speak directly to its consumers in 720p. With its own announcement show, then subsequent killer keynotes at both E3 and gamescom, Sony has spent its money and its time wisely. The TGS follow-up had to happen, but saving a big announcement for a show that fewer people are going to watch (and where Western viewers are tucked up in bed thanks to the time difference) would be foolish, quite frankly.

Perhaps the most interesting titbit to come out of the Sony conference was

actually not directly linked to PS4. Gaikai, the game streaming service that Sony now owns and will be coming to PlayStation 4, has also been confirmed for Vita TV. This means that, theoretically, you'll be able to stream high-definition, high-spec games through a set top box that costs around £100. The device hasn't been confirmed for the West yet, and Gaikai is obviously massively unproven and currently little more than a pipe dream, but if it does all work as promised, that's a huge bonus for a piece of kit looking to compete directly with Apple TV and US-based kit like Roku.

The possibilities for this are far-reaching to say the least. It's something that's been tried before – the ill-fated OnLive pioneered in this space, giving out free consoles in the process, but ultimately a combination of limited bandwidth and consumer confusion meant

HOT KNOWLEDGE INJECTION



PS4 to act as mobile game server

The newly announced PlayStation 4 mobile app will turn your PS4 into a mobile game server, should you wish. You'll be able to stream mobile games that you have stored on your PS4, meaning you don't need to clog up your portable device's storage. Smart, phone.



Amazon to offer £10 next-gen upgrade

Amazon will offer a £10 upgrade scheme when you choose to buy the next-gen version of certain games. So if you grab *Call Of Duty: Ghosts*, *Battlefield* and *FIFA* on PS3, it will only cost you £30 to buy all three PS4 versions through Amazon.



Gravity Rush sequel announced

Sony has announced a sequel to gorgeous PS Vita exclusive *Gravity Rush*. Players will once again fill the boots of Kat, the daft leading lady from the original game, and you'll have plenty of opportunities to tumble about in the sky not quite knowing where you're going.



For a nation where FPS games don't tend to do all that well, it's odd to see *Killzone* getting such a push.

A hands-on look at *Metal Gear Solid V* was one of the few good things to come out of TGS.

the service fell flat and died. Gaikai, though, has the support of Sony's infrastructure and on Vita TV it'll be a secondary function rather than the reason to buy it.

If it all works as intended, and you can stream demos (you can sync a DualShock to Vita TV, handily), older games or even new PS4 games, then the Vita TV will be an essential piece of hardware. Still, this announcement was far from enough to make the world care about TGS this year. The halls of the Makuhari Messe were conspicuous by their emptiness, and while consumer interest was still high, there's a feeling that gamescom is so much more important to publishers these days that TGS's September date might have to move.

It's not all doom and gloom, though. Strangely, the Japanese games market (as opposed to its triple-A industry) is actually

doing reasonably well. The popularity of mobile games like Gung Ho's *Puzzle & Dragons* is massive in a way that very few traditional games can even comprehend (this is the company that owns Grasshopper, incidentally, which might go some way as to explaining why Suda 51 is allowed such creative freedom), and games like *Monster Hunter* still have the power to permeate the cultural mainstream like few games ever manage in the West.

So, as much as it might seem like Sony is undervaluing its home market, it's better to think of it as a company that's finally accepting globalisation and playing to its strengths (something it struggled with during the PS3 years). And in a few short weeks, we'll all be clutching DualShock 4s and all of this will be little more than a bleak, faded memory anyway. Hurrah and stuff.



TOP 5 CROSSOVERS WE'D LIKE TO SEE

If there's one thing us nerdy types like, it's a good fan-pleasing crossover – characters from two different universes coming together, usually for the purpose of punching each other in the face. Here are five we'd love to see in videogame form...

1 WWE VS DRAGON BALL Z

A bunch of sweaty, muscular guys with mental hair screaming at the tops of their voices before punching each other through mountains – versus the cast of *Dragon Ball Z*. No Kamehameha in the world can stand up to a goddamn german suplex. Want to charge up for the Spirit Bomb, Goku? Nope. KICK. WHAM. STUNNER. BAH GAWD!



2 DEVIL MAY CRY VS METAL GEAR RISING

Two men with white hair and swords, both with a penchant for backflips and looking cool while cutting stuff up. Who would win in a fight between (classic) Dante and Raiden? Actually, this one is kind of easy: Dante would obliterate the whiny Snake-wannabe. Maybe we don't need this one after all. Would be cool, though.



3 DYNASTY WARRIORS X GAME OF THRONES

This one would make the big bucks. The characters and world of the hugely popular *Game Of Thrones* books/show with the fun gameplay of *Dynasty Warriors*. Just imagine cutting down thousands of dudes as Jaime Lannister, Robb Stark or Danaerys Targaryen. Can we trademark this one?

4 LEGO SKYRIM

Skyrim is almost perfect as is, but if one thing could make it better it would be everything being made of Lego. Maybe a few less bugs would be nice too, if we're being picky. As epic as murdering a dragon atop an enormous mountain is, it would be even better if it exploded into thousands of Lego bricks afterwards. Gotta love them studs.



5 CAPCOM VS SNK 3

A bit less fictional than the others, but still far less real than we'd like. The odds of us actually seeing a sequel to one of the greatest fighting games of all time is extremely slim, mainly due to SNK's misfortunes in recent years and Capcom's focus on other, more popular projects. Still, we can dream. We can always dream...

AND FOUR GAMES THAT WE DEFINITELY DON'T WANT



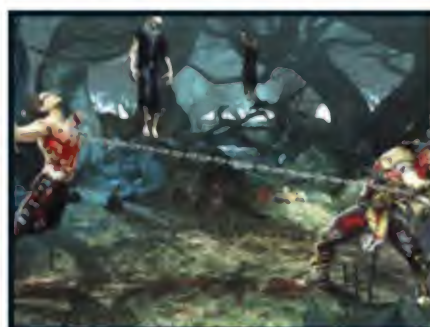
FIFA VS PES

We don't even know how this would work, but it would inevitably end up with a bunch of pansies falling over dramatically at the first sniff of a tackle. Nobody likes both games anyway...



CALL OF DUTY X BATTLEFIELD

The two biggest FPS series in the world combine to create the best selling game of all time. It would be exactly the same as every other game in both franchises. And everyone online would be a dick.



FIGHT NIGHT VS MORTAL KOMBAT

Mastery of the sweet science isn't worth much when your opponent disembowels you with a pair of cursed blades. This might be a bit one-sided.



SILENT HILL VS SKYLANDERS

Imagine collecting figures of classic *Silent Hill* monsters like nurses or Pyramid Head! Imagine Spyro and his friends getting torn to pieces by horrific figments of their own minds!

WHEN ARE YOU PLANNING ON BUYING A PS4?

YOUR SHOUT
Play readers have their say

Play Online

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YouTube

youtube.com/PlayMagUK

I know buying a console on launch is a bad idea, as there are due to be hardware bugs and there aren't many good games yet. But still, I've never gotten a console on launch day before and I can't help but buy into the hype this time. Roll on 29 November!

THISISME

I'll get one when *The Last Guardian* comes out.

HORATIO RAZZMATAZZ

Launch day, for sure. Can't wait! I'm gonna get *Watch Dogs*, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*, *Battlefield* and maybe *Call Of Duty* as well. It's gonna be awesome!

BIG DAVE

No games I want yet so I'll wait. Probably wait for a price drop too. I'll be playing *Grand Theft Auto V* for so long that I don't think I'm going to care.

BANANABANANA

twitter

twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

My 30th birthday is December so what better present than a PS4 on launch?

@HITMAN_MITZ

I'll get mine in 2014 – more games and better deals.

@HYBRIDHERO

Launch of course, I pre-ordered way back in March.

@DSONICX

Launch, not that I've managed to find one damn game I want for the thing yet.

@GRAVITYRUSHERS

I'll wait until the inevitable slimmer one comes out.

@HARVEY_THEDOG

PS4 midnight UK launch!

@MARKSMIGGZY17

I'll wait a year for more games to be released.

@IDIOT_KILLJOY

Pre-ordered for launch date because it will be the first time I can afford to buy straight away and not be six months behind.

@ICEDGRAPHICS

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Waiting until after Christmas, more games and better bundles!

PAUL ALDIS

Pre-ordered mine right after E3. Will probably play *Killzone* first (digital only... I don't buy boxed games anymore). Actually, the release date is the same day as my wedding anniversary! Uh oh...

NEIL MURRAY

Probably wait a few months; there are always hardware problems with a new launch. I imagine *GTA V* alone will keep me busy until whenever I want anyway.

JAMES ARCHBOLD

Pre-ordered, I just can't wait. Think about it at least once a day haha.

KARL MORRELL

I've postponed until next summer, will have enough with *GTA V*, *Battlefield* and *COD* to last me, then I'll pick one up hopefully when it's on a summer sale.

ADAM BELHER

On launch day, pre-ordered mine back in February, gonna get a sexy magma red controller and *Watch Dogs* too.

NEIL CANNAVAN

I'll wait six months as I did with the PS2 and 3... Oh, who am I kidding? I'll end up running out and searching for one on the first day!

TONY WATSON

Launch day – *FIFA*, *DriveClub*, *Need For Speed: Rivals* and tonnes of indie titles on PSN...

PAUL BOGGAN

ANATOMY OF...

SOL BADGUY

With the great news that the absurdly beautiful *Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-* will be coming to PS4, what better time than right now to learn all about the series' ironically named main character, Mr Badguy?

HE'S THE BAD GUY

The world of *Guilty Gear* takes place a couple of hundred years into the future. Mankind discovered magic, and a scientific project to infuse the power into people resulted in the creation of super-powered but monstrous 'Gears'. The Gears rebelled, resulting in a hundred-year war that destroyed most of the world before humanity finally grasped a victory. The world is now recovering from that war, a lawless place full of strife and suffering. Sol is a bounty hunter, tracking down and taking care of the real bad guys in this new frontier...

ORDER IN THE COURT

Another version of Sol pops up in later *Guilty Gear* games called *Order Sol*. This is our Freddie as he was during the hundred-year Gear war, during which he was a member of the Sacred Order Of Holy Knights. The Order was dedicated to defeating the Gears, but Sol grew disenchanted with their methods and left before the war was over. Sol later took down the Gears' leader, Justice, finally ending the war and setting the stage for the original *Guilty Gear*. He's done a lot since, but the story still revolves around his search for That Man and the eradication of the Gears.

FREDDIE FOR SHORT

Except he isn't, not really. Sol is actually Frederick, one of the three scientists behind the Gears Project and the original prototype Gear. His powers grant him drastically slower aging and immense fighting ability, but Sol must keep a constant control on himself in case his true form bursts through and wreaks havoc. It's a secret known by next to no-one in the games, and one that Sol keeps to himself as he hunts for 'That Man', the mysterious antagonist of the series and another of the three original scientists.

DUSTLOOP

After resting dormant for half a decade, *Guilty Gear* is finally back with the bizarrely named *Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*, set to hit PS3 and PS4 next year. Using a jaw-dropping style of 3D model that looks more 2D than most 2D games, it simply has to be seen in motion to be believed. The story of Sol and the other Gear hunters continues, and if Arc System Works' efforts on the *BlazBlue* story mode is any indication, the single-player content on offer should be great. Add in the lightning fast, combo-heavy fighting action that the series made famous and you have one of our most anticipated games.

GUILTY, GUILTY, NOT GUILTY...

It's not just Sol's story – there are plenty of other eccentric characters to choose from...

KY KISKE

Sol's eternal rival and the head of the International Police Force. During the war he was leader of the Sacred Order Of Holy Knights. His black and white morality and dedication to law and order often put him at odds with Sol.



MILLIA RAGE

A Russian assassin, Millia has the power to control her hair, moving it at will and using it to defend and attack. After losing her parents at a young age, Millia was adopted into the nearby Assassin Syndicate where she gained her powers.



MAY

A young, cheerful member of the Jellyfish Air Pirates, an airborne gang of outlaws who are dedicated to helping people in need. She fights with an enormous anchor that is bigger and heavier than she is.



POTEMKIN

A slave soldier of the military dictatorship of Zepp, Potemkin was forced into the first *Guilty Gear* tournament by his superiors. He fights using raw strength, meaning that fans of grappler type characters should start with him.





FREE TO PLAY OR PAY TO WIN?

Free-to-play games are coming to console in a big way on PS4. Is this the death of gaming as we know it, or has the apocalypse been greatly exaggerated?



I'M THINKING ABOUT what games to buy with my PS4. Besides *Lego Marvel Super Heroes* (a necessity) I'm seriously considering not buying any, thanks to the line-up of free-to-play games that will be gracing the system around launch. With stuff like *PlanetSide 2*, *War Thunder* and the already awesome *DC Universe Online*, why would I need to buy anything?

Free games might seem like a good thing, but worries have existed around free-to-play for as long as the model has existed. Concerns over corruption of the formula – games becoming 'pay to win' – are scarily real, and set to invade the minds of PS4 gamers shortly.

In my eyes, there is a fine balance between an acceptable level of micro-transactions and a game that requires money to succeed. My rule of thumb is whether a title *requires* you to spend money to gain an advantage in the game. Obviously, any free-to-play game will give you the option of spending money to advance quicker, have better stuff or simply look cooler. That's fine, as long as I have the option to get that stuff for free as well.

Let's be more specific. Several free to play games have two forms of currency: one that you earn as you play and one you pay for. Decent items often cost a large amount of the earned currency, taking days of play to earn. Conversely, players can buy the same item for a

small amount of the 'real', paid-for currency, skipping the grind. It's not ideal, but as far as free-to-play goes, this is at least acceptable.

What isn't okay is when players with more money have a distinct advantage over those that don't shell out. This completely destroys any balance in a multiplayer arena and makes free players feel utterly worthless in the grand scheme of things.

Another thing I find inexcusable is the way some free-to-play games limit the amount you can play each day before making you spend money to continue. It's a model that is common on Facebook games – play for 30 minutes, then choose to either wait a day or pay a few quid if you want to continue.

The best free-to-play games have players spending on things that don't affect the actual gameplay at all – cosmetic changes to their character, special outfits, even extra maps – the key is that the core game that everyone is playing is the same, regardless of how much money they have spent.

It's clearly very easy for free-to-play to go bad, with the greed of publishers getting in the way of a balanced and enjoyable gaming experience, but that doesn't have to be the case. *PlanetSide 2* and *War Thunder* are two of my most anticipated PS4 games, and if they provide a fun, fair service, I'll be happy to reward them with a bit of cash somewhere down the line.



BUNGIE!

You know, dem guys wot made *Halo*. Nobody makes an online shooter quite as well, and it has left Microsoft behind to move to greener, multi-platform pastures. Its new game is *Destiny*, coming to PS3 and PS4 some time next year.

DON'T SAY THE M WORD

Destiny will be a "shared-world experience" where players all exist in the same universe. Sounds a lot like an MMO to us, but Bungie has been careful to avoid using the term. What's the problem, guys? We like MMOs!

CLASS IS IN SESSION

Next players choose a class: Hunter, Warlock or Titan. Hunters are a recon class, Warlocks use magic-like powers and Titans are your big bruisers. Further customisation as you level up creates a character unique to your play style.

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

Players control a Guardian, warriors imbued with the power of the Traveller as they set out to reclaim their empire from hostile aliens. Characters can be one of three races: humans, the exotic Awoken and the mysterious Exo.

DESTINY

DEVELOPER Bungie PUBLISHER Activision ETA 2014

BILLY NO MATES

Of course, if you hate people or social interaction you can play through *Destiny* on your own, but it seems that choosing such a path will be limiting your own enjoyment. This is a game built around teaming up with your mates, and to not do so seems a bit of a shame.

EPIC WIN

Characters will get loot from downed foes similar to an MMO, and finding a shiny new epic gun is sure to feel mighty rewarding. Players of different levels will be able to play together, Bungie making sure that everyone gets an item relevant to their level and class.

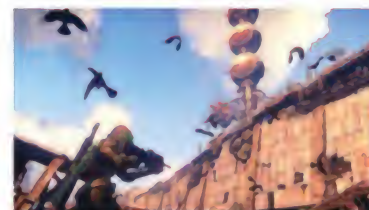
BIG BALLS

Destiny takes place in a future where humanity has almost been wiped out. Humans have now retreated to a single city, protected by the enigmatic 'Traveller', an extraterrestrial orb that once allowed humanity to reach the stars in the first place.

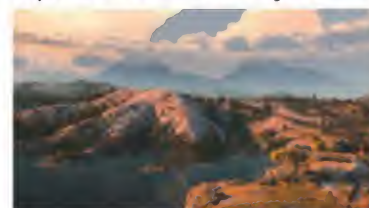
KILL YOUR FRIENDS

Competitive multiplayer will make a return. Nobody does it quite like Bungie, although it has clarified that PvP will be optional. You don't have to get repeatedly murdered and teabagged by a poorly raised 12-year-old unless you really want to.

QUESTION: HOW COME BUNGIE IS SUCH A BIG DEAL?



PlayStation diehards who have never owned an Xbox might not be sold on Bungie or *Halo*. Why should you care? Well, a number of reasons, the biggest being that *Halo* is arguably the most important FPS of the last 15 years.



Think of all the standard tropes used in almost every FPS today. Practically every single one was introduced or popularised by *Halo*. Regenerating health? *Halo* did that. Carrying two guns at a time? *Halo* did that. Drivable vehicles? *Halo* did that. A dedicated button to throw grenades? *Halo*. Looking down to see your feet? *Halo*. Melee attacks using your gun rather than a specific weapon? *Halo*. Campaign co-op? Still *Halo*.



Halo reinvented the genre, and over the next decade Bungie refined the formula, arriving at the excellent *Halo Reach*. Along the way it essentially created online FPS play on console with *Halo 2*, single-handedly validating the fledgling Xbox Live as a gaming platform. These guys really know what they are doing.



And now, for the first time in over ten years, Bungie is cutting loose and going all-out with a new vision. *Destiny* has the potential to be as revolutionary and important as *Halo* once was and, even if it isn't, you can be damn sure it will be a thoroughly excellent game.



So far, *Destiny* looks like a mixture of *Halo*, *Borderlands* and *World Of Warcraft*, all excellent games in their own right that, when combined, have limitless potential. We can see ourselves playing *Destiny* for years to come. Bring it on.

Answer: Because we said so.

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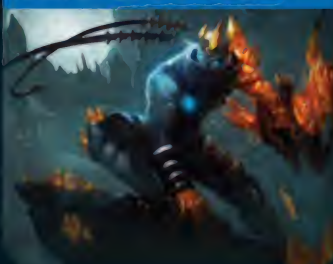
IN-DEPTH GUIDES



BIG INTERVIEWS



MMO CHANNEL



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Re:Play

You are the controller! But only on these pages

Oh look, a letters page. This month we have old-timers, new-timers, Elder Scrolls and tech questions. Plus, Twitter nonsense. Have at it!

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FREE TO PAY?

Hey **Play**,

ZeniMax and Bethesda have recently confirmed that *The Elder Scrolls Online* will use an £8.99 a month subscription model. In my opinion this is best, as it gives you 100 per cent access to the game rather than paying for features as you play. As I'm going to Uni soon I think this is the best way, as you don't need to worry about spending a fortune in the game without realising it. Do you think



● Paid subscriptions are quickly becoming a thing of the past in MMOs.

this will be a successful model or will they go free-to-play like other MMO's such as *Star Wars: The Old Republic*?

Thanks,

Peter Martin

We think it will do exactly the same thing as *The Old Republic* – be a subscription based game for a few months before switching to a free-to-play model. F2P is the future of MMOs without a doubt and, when it's done right, that is no bad thing.

PLAY = YAY

I have to thank you guys at **Play**. I've had my PS3 for four years but originally I was on the fence about buying one. *Uncharted 2* was coming out, my uncle recommended you guys to me so I gave in and bought an issue, you reviewed *Uncharted 2* and that was that! I gave in and bought a PS3 and *Uncharted 2* and have gotten every issue of **Play** since. I love the way you give coverage on everything, from the mainstream like *Uncharted* and



● What better introduction to the PS3 library than the glory of *Uncharted 2*?

Battlefield to the niche like *Ni No Kuni* and *BlazBlue*. You guys helped make this gen my favourite, I am patiently (not really) waiting for my pre-ordered PS4 and *Watch Dogs*. So, thanks you guys, and hopefully this next generation will be even better than the last!!!

Luke Devine

We do love a good bit of sycophantic pandering. Please, do go on. Tell us how good we look. Tell us how lovely we smell. Whisper sweet nothings into our ears.

THE BIG ISSUE

THIS IS NOT OUR JOB

Hi. I need to set up my ps online on new broadband provider. Changed from sky to bt. On settings. Can you remind me of the correct options to choose. Got my ssid no ok. Thanks.

James Murray

Wow. Erm... do we look like tech support? Try turning it off and on again.



● What is this? Does it play games? Where's the power button?

Things you may have missed on NowGamer.com's YouTube page

You Tube
www.youtube.com/
NowGamerTube



GTA V PS3 VS XBOX 360
WHICH VERSION IS SUPERIOR?



COD: GHOSTS MULTIPLAYER
EXCLUSIVE ONLINE FOOTAGE



SAINTS ROW IV REVIEW
MORE PRESIDENTIAL MADNESS



WRITE IN AND WIN! If you're chosen as Star Letter, you win a game. This month, the prize is a copy of **Beyond: Two Souls** starring Juno and Green Goblin! It's about ghosts and stuff.



PLAY

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10,065
Jan-Dec 2012

STAR LETTER

BACK IN MY DAY

Dear Play,

I read about the constant anticipation for the 'Next Big Thing', or perhaps the 'console to rule them all', and in 40 years or so of gaming I can tell you it has just been the same thing over and over again. I come from the good ol' Atari 2600 days and the *Space Invader* arcade days, where the mere thought of photo-realistic gaming with perfect, stereo-quality sound was a dream that would require a stern slap in the face and an ice bath afterwards just to snap out of it. Well, now we have it, yet still there is desperate pining for more – for improvement, for enhancement, for the Next Big Thing. But it must be asked... when does it ever end? Games these days are amazing – there is no question about their superiority over the games played in 'my day'. I get a huge amount of satisfaction from most new releases because for me the future is *already* here and I don't need to look much further because games these days are already hugely satisfying and rewarding. And not to mention load instantly most of the time! It used to take 30 minutes sometimes on the old C64 datasets! Anyway, my point is, enjoy what is here already... kids these days don't seem to realise just how far things have come in such a short period of time, and that gaming simply has never been better.

Rob Roemer

We agree, Rob, that gaming has never been better. If you look at how far the medium has come in a few short decades, it's nothing short of remarkable. However, for that advancement to have happened, people have to constantly be looking forward, asking what is next, never satisfied. Contentment breeds complacency, so we say, keep looking forward. Keep reaching for that next rung of the gaming ladder!



☎ If you remember playing this, we respect you.

twitter

www.twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

Twitter is a website that we occasionally use if we're really bored

@DSOINX do you think we'll ever get a GTA game set in the uk?

Really not sure if you're serious. Hope not...

@ICEDGRAPHICS its my wifes 30th birthday tomorrow what should I buy her?
Some lovely frozen vol-au-vents from Iceland.

@PJMARTIN1995 Top tips for a Uni student?
Down it, fresher!

@HYBRIDHERO What's it like holding the DualShock 4?
Quite a lot better than not holding the DualShock 4.

@DEEJBRUCE coffee person or tea?
Neither. Milkshake!

@STOZA_ what will be the first game you play on ps4?
Probably Killzone.

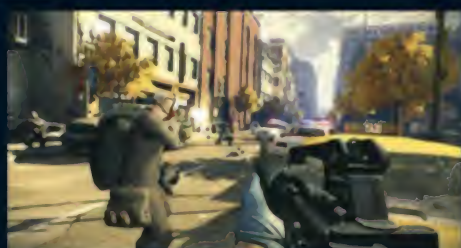
@G_MACINTOSH Is gta 5 the best game in the universe?
Nope, Ribbit King is.

@ENTERTAINIAS What is the answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe and everything?
42.

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FINAL FANTASY

A FRANCHISE REBORN

It's one of the most storied series in all of gaming, yet Square Enix's flagship franchise has fallen on fairly tough times of late. *Final Fantasy XIII* veered away from traditional structure and mechanics and split the fan base down the middle in the process, while mobiles have been flooded with expensive ports and cynical cash grab spin-offs that do nothing but sully the series' good name. But with the majority of *Final Fantasy XIV*'s teething troubles resolved within its first month and three exciting new games on the horizon, Square is in the perfect position to blast its biggest game back to the top. **Play** speaks with RPG design masters Tetsuya Nomura and Yoshinori Kitase to get the inside story on the games that will save *Final Fantasy*.

FINAL FANTASY XV

THE CORE SERIES MARCHES ONTO PS4



Perhaps the big surprise back at E3 came in the form of this bad boy, sunken treasure *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* reborn as a proper numbered entry in the series. It's a flashy, all-action next-gen RPG and... well, that's about the extent of what anyone actually knows. It's been all quiet on that front ever since June, though we were fortunate enough to score an interview recently with someone that might know a little bit more – director and *FF* design legend Tetsuya Nomura.

"I must first point out that personally I do not really understand the idea of categorising games into a genre like 'Japanese RPGs'." he tells us, sharing the same concerns over the labels applied to his games as Square colleague Yoshinori Kitase. "It is only recently that some games have come to be called 'JRPGs' or whatever," Nomura continues. "I feel that nothing has really changed from before, with this moniker suddenly coming out of nowhere. I think that RPGs are simply RPGs wherever they are from."

We can understand his frustration with this branding, but we've never considered it to be pigeonholing – like J-Pop and

J-Rock, JRPG is just a subgenre of something larger, and one with a specific flavour. Indeed, perhaps the reason Nomura believes this term to be a recent thing comes from the fact that *Final Fantasy* has only recently started to leave traditional JRPG traditions and values behind in search of new ways to impress. *FFXIII* marked a huge change in terms of structure, as did *XIII-2*, albeit in a way that tried to address player complaints about Lightning's debut. But for *FFXV*, it's open-plan action – no more random encounters, no screen-shattering 'you are in a fight now' effects and a much more natural flow from exploration into combat and back again. It reminded us of *Kingdom Hearts* in that respect, although Nomura shoots down that reference fairly promptly. "The general control scheme may be similar but the core game concept is completely different," he explains. "For example, in *KH* you control just Sora on his own but *FF* is very much about forming a party of characters and playing all of them so that concept is quite different indeed."

Much of the freedom comes thanks to the power of PS4, although changing platform mid-development did apparently throw something of a spanner in the works. "The game

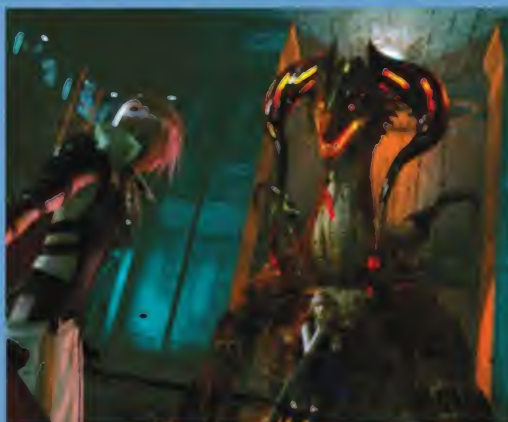


● You'd never know *FFXV* started out as a PS3 game. It looks absolutely incredible.

THE GENERATION GAP

WITH NEXT-GEN FF LOOMING LARGE, CAN CURRENT TECH STILL CUT IT? KITASE THINKS SO...

With two new consoles due before the end of the year, it's understandable that the flashy visuals of next-gen games are everywhere. But *Lightning Returns* producer Yoshinori Kitase reckons you shouldn't write off the current generation just yet. "Well of course I think that it is quite a tricky undertaking for us to compete against titles on the new high-spec hardware, especially from a graphics standpoint," he admits. "However, this kind of challenge is something you have had across all the generations and it will take developers time to fully harness the power of the new hardware. *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII* is the third title we have done on the current generation hardware and is the culmination of our experience and know-how working with it so I think that we have a level of quality and polish that can compete with next-gen titles."



being changed to the next-gen hardware has had both advantages and disadvantages for development," Nomura recalls. "Being next-gen, we wanted to improve the quality but to do that requires a finer and more detailed level of finish which in turn ramps up the volume of development work that needs to be done. So we have been discussing

"I DO NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND THE IDEA OF CATEGORISING GAMES INTO A GENRE LIKE JAPANESE RPGS"

how to get a suitable balance while looking into what will be possible." Oddly, though, there were nowhere near as many narrative and structural changes made as there were technical ones. "There has been no effect on the story just

because the game has switched to being a numbered entry in the series. There will be no major changes but I am sure that there will be alterations to the volume of content with it becoming a finer and more detailed game," reveals Nomura.

He goes on to explain that, while the original tech demo shown at last year's E3 conference isn't directly

related to *Final Fantasy XV*, it has at least informed some design decisions. "With *Agni's Philosophy*, Visual Works (our internal CG department) established the Look Dev method – a tool to express the direction of a game's visual

style through video," Nomura tells us. "I feel that it has contributed greatly to the development of *FFXV*."

In spite of the community backlash after *XIII*, Nomura explains that the team isn't letting vitriol or outrage get in the way of the team making the game it wants to make. "For *FFXV*, we are simply doing what we feel we must to get the game right," he states, although positive reception to what has been shown suggests that it is at least thinking along the right lines this time in terms of appeasing Lightning's hater brigade, even if they didn't actively cause this change of direction. "Nothing has been altered due to user feedback to *FFXIII* or other games. There is no reward to game development until the game is finally released so we are still struggling through many trials and tribulations at the moment. I am going to give it all I have."



Each character will have their own weapons and unique play styles.



The scale of the combat looks amazing. There's just so much going on all the time.



Behemoths are supposed to be scary but we just want to pet this big guy...

Few developers can squeeze more out of the PlayStation 3 than Square Enix.



Lightning might be the only playable character but battles are still exciting.

LIGHTNING RETURNS: FINAL FANTASY XIII

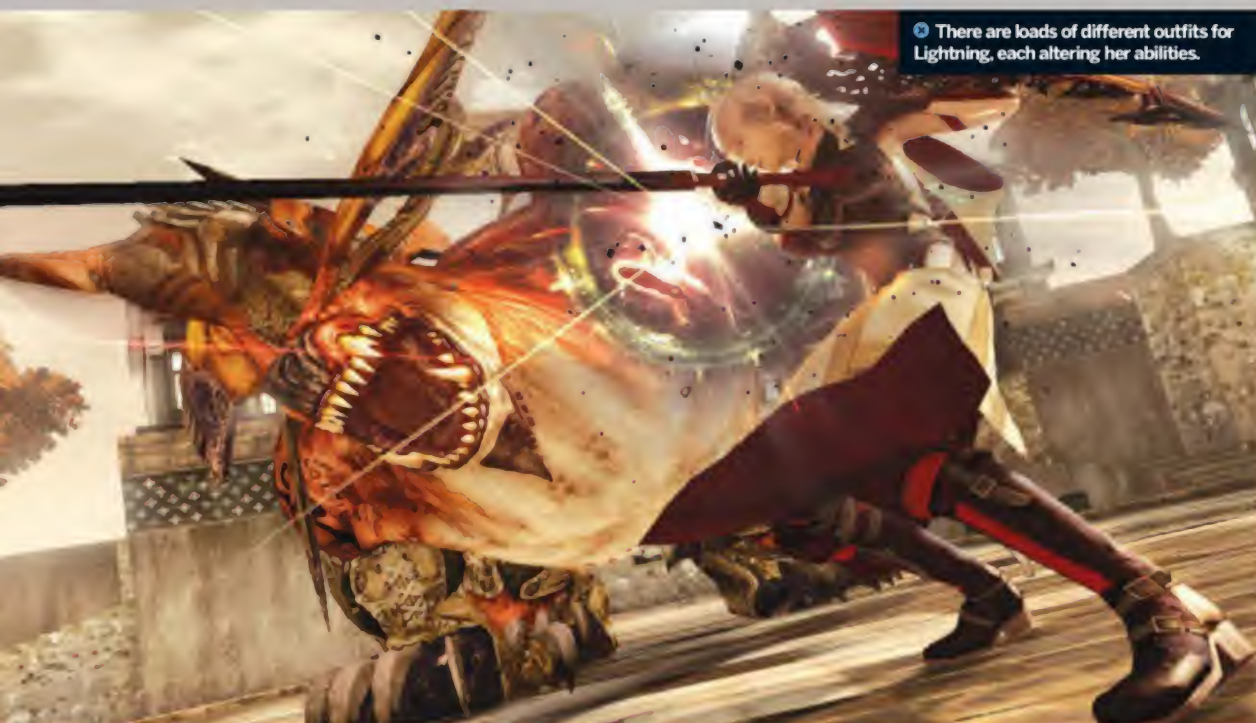
SHE'S STRIKING FOR A THIRD TIME

When *Final Fantasy XIII* was first announced, Square's plans for the title were as impenetrable as they were ambitious. Dubbed *Fabula Nova Crystallis FFXIII*, the triple-pronged gamesplosion would be made up of three individual games based on similar themes and worlds. *FFXIII* came out to mixed reception in 2009 but the other two limbs never saw release under their original names – *Agito XIII* would become awesome Japan-only PSP title *Type-0* while *Versus XIII*, it was announced earlier in the year, is now *FFXV*. But for all the fuss surrounding *XIII*'s radical change of direction at launch, most players were agreed on the fact that heroine Lightning was pretty much the best thing about it. And as *Lightning Returns* producer Yoshinori Kitase recalls, it was then that the plan changed.

"Around the time of the original *Final Fantasy XIII* first coming out on worldwide release was when we made the change of direction," he explains. "Lightning is a character who really stands out in the *Final Fantasy* series

for her prominent personality and we wanted to explore her further." Which, as it turns out, is the primary reason for Lightning going it solo in this, her third and final outing. "The main intention we had was to allow the player to really get inside Lightning's head and spend a lot of time with the character as this is the final game that she will be in and her appearance in the second one was rather short," Kitase confirms. "So ultimately, it was not down to game system reasons that we made the player control





There are loads of different outfits for Lightning, each altering her abilities.



only one character, but because of what we wanted to do with that character."

But a greater focus on Lightning isn't all Square has taken from fan feedback following *Final Fantasy Firteen's* fallout (alright, *XIII* – it just felt wrong to interrupt such a lovely flow of Fs) and, while *XIII-2* showed that the team had taken on board many of the complaints about the previous game (making new issues in the process), the *Lightning Returns* team has had entire forums' worth of both games' pros and cons to mull over. Kitase seems to think that his team is on the right track. "We believed that by taking on board the negative opinions from fans as well as the positive ones and then reflecting that feedback in the next game after a much shorter development period, we could greatly improve the game and develop it into something that would even be accepted by those who were not so impressed the first time round," he tells us. "Moving on from *Final Fantasy XIII-2*, *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII* is the final answer to the question of whether we have managed that, and we hope that everyone out there can see it and judge for themselves."

Either way, it's another different direction for *Final Fantasy* – the third in as many games, in fact. But does this continued divergence from ATB systems and picking battle options from a menu mean we've seen the last of those traditions? "Never say never" appears to be Kitase's take on it. He reels off the three FF titles currently in development, describing *FFX HD* as "a command selection-based RPG" and *Lightning Returns* as "a tactical combat-focussed RPG that pushes the limits of being action game-like" before teasing with talk of *FFXV's* "emotional battle system". Oh, and the last one was an MMO, remember? "I think that all of these systems hold some potential for the future," states an open-minded Kitase, going on to hint at some potential good news down the line for Vita-owning fans of old-school FF. "Of course, the decision of which to use will very much depend upon the device being played on. I would definitely say that menu selection-type battles still fit very well for touch screen devices, do they not?"

A fine point, but we get smacked around the face with an even finer one when the term 'JRPG' comes up in

EORZEA REBORN

WHY YOU SHOULD BE PLAYING THE OTHER LAST GREAT PS3 FINAL FANTASY – A REALM REBORN – AS WELL

Yes, it came out back in August and no, we still haven't reviewed it. MMOs simply aren't the kind of things that can, or indeed should, be rushed. Expect a full write-up on our experiences in the revamped world of Eorzea in the near future but, for now, suffice to say it's both a brilliant game in its own right and a great display of a developer listening to and addressing the concerns of its fans. Well, when you can actually get on the crammed servers, that is – Square Enix seems to have wildly underestimated how popular this would be. With changing class as simple as switching weapons or tools and some skills carried over between them, there's no need for alts any more and a single character can, with enough work, be taken to the top of every profession in the game. But given that we'll only just have hit level 50 in our first profession by the time you read this, you can probably estimate just how long such a pursuit might take...



conversation. "Whether the term is used for better or worse, I feel that the fact that it recognises these games as being distinctly 'Japanese' can only be a good thing," muses Kitase. "But I often hear the term 'Western-style' being used as a comparison or counterpoint to 'Japanese-style' but am fascinated by this comparison and would really like to ask if there is a distinct 'British-style' or 'European-style' or not?"

Without having to be asked, Kitase elaborates. And boy, can that guy elaborate. "In the world of cinema there is the Hollywood film, and then as a comparison there is say British or French cinema that clearly have different personalities and unique characteristics to them. If we look at music then British rock and American rock are also quite different. It is the same for sports... for example in say, motorsport, the flavour of IndyCar is very different to F1 circuit racing. So basically for all other fields of culture, art and sport etc, even if they use that 'Western' term to lump everything together, it is still understood that the character of North American works and European ones are distinct. Even Japanese people get that when we look at it. However, when it comes to games, I do not feel that there is a great deal of difference between North American and European productions. I cannot help but think that everything has become confined to an American style, as shown by most FPS and TPS-style games. I personally think that for the games industry to spread and prosper as a form of art or culture then it needs to place value on diversity across different local regions. In that spirit I want to continue bringing out the unique flavour in our Japanese style of games."

FINAL FANTASY X/X-2 HD

BACK TO PROTECT US FROM SIN

With more 'will they/won't they?' surrounding a *FFVII* remake than you get from an entire

Friends box set, it seems a little strange that Square Enix should head back to Spira for this pair of HD remakes.

Strange perhaps, but not unjustifiable – Kitase's reasoning when pushed on the choice of games is certainly sound. "It is currently possible to play all the titles in the series up to *FFIX* on the current hardware generation, through the PS3 archives or on PC," he reasons. "But for the PS2 games, it is pretty hard to play them on current hardware. So that is why we felt that *FFX*, our first PS2 *Final Fantasy* game, would be most suitable for an HD remaster."

But while a remake offers a chance to address issues that have been raised over the years, Square instead seems to be confident that the classics can still hold up just as they were, only a little

prettier. "The gameplay itself is basically faithful to the original game," explains Kitase, although there'll apparently still be new things to discover for most Western players. "The versions of both *FFX* and *FFX-2* that are included here are based on the international editions released in Japan. This means that some of the major features from those versions, such as *X-2*'s creature creator, will be available for European and American users to play for the first time and I think that may look like quite a big change for those players."

When we come to quiz Kitase on the main difficulty in converting a PS2 game for new hardware, he manages to find the one answer we never expected – that the PS2 was simply too good. "That would be the fact that the PS2 was such a great platform. Of course, the PS3 and PS Vita have better specs but, with the Emotion Engine at its core, the PS2 really was a very high performance graphics machine. We used the graphic engine of the day at full capacity when creating the original game, and this allowed us to realise the kinds of visuals that just could not have been done with the standard methods available then. This meant that when we came to port *FFX* to the PS3 there was a lot of trouble, because it could not be achieved simply by converting the data across to the newer format."

The Square Enix veteran is currently juggling this remake and *Lightning Returns*, which he points to as a perfect example of how the studio is trying to evolve the genre and move away from its conventions. But in the same breath, he also suggests that there's new to be found in the old. "I feel that these games have an ineffable something in them which seems to have been forgotten by a lot of modern games and so, paradoxically, they can feel fresh and different because of that," Kitase closes. "Does it not follow that something which is intrinsically interesting will maintain its value and not get pinned down into traditional frameworks or generational trends?"

Yuna's role as a trainee summoner makes Eidolons more important than ever.



He's a bit of a whiny bugger but that Tidus kid sure plays a mean Blitzball...



Auron: still one of the biggest badasses in all of gaming. Kimahri, not so much.



Hearing "RRRIDE ZE SHOOPUF?" again brought back many happy memories...

HEROES OF LEGEND

A BLUFFER'S GUIDE TO FORMER FINAL FANTASY STARS



"I FEEL THAT THESE GAMES HAVE AN INEFFABLE SOMETHING IN THEM WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN BY A LOT OF MODERN GAMES"

- 1 **WARRIOR OF LIGHT (FF, 1987)**
One of the four Light Warriors, each of whom carried a different elemental orb that must be restored to power. Not much of a standout character, sure, but this little guy hails from an era when games didn't need a face.
- 2 **FIRION (FFII, 1988)**
Having made it onto the box of this Japan-only game, Firion was arguably the franchise's first 'main character' – a youth who loses his adopted family and heads out in seek of revenge. That always ends well, right?
- 3 **ONION KNIGHT (FFIII, 1990)**
There wasn't just one Onion Knight but four – it's the starting job for each of the generic starting quartet rather than a person. But with the debut of the new Job system, none of them would stay an Onion Knight for long.
- 4 **CECIL (FFIV, 1991)**
Returning to locked classes for the sequel was never going to be a problem when central character Cecil was a badass Dark Knight and his eleven buddies had equally cool (and useful) professions...
- 5 **BARTZ (FFV, 1992)**
A 20-year-old wanderer with a chocobo companion named Boco, Bartz's look would change every time he took on a different one of the 22 Jobs on offer. None of them really looked like this, but whatever – we dig the super-cute art.
- 6 **TERRA (FFVI, 1994)**
Born of a human mother and an Esper father, Terra's magical abilities land her in the servitude of the Empire when this final SNES adventure starts. Freed from slavery soon after, her voyage of self-discovery can begin...
- 7 **CLOUD (FFVII, 1997)**
The most iconic *Final Fantasy* star. His mysterious past and ongoing rivalry with Sephiroth mean that even though he speaks few words, he's as interesting a character to explore as any the series has offered.
- 8 **SQUALL (FFVIII, 1999)**
Some heroes use swords. Others use guns. Squall enjoys both so much that he doesn't have to decide – just ask his trusty Gunblade why. Again, there's a rivalry here that turns him from emo pioneer to awesome hero.
- 9 **ZIDANE (FFIX, 2000)**
The only character on this rundown with a tail, which has to count for something. Zidane is a bandit whose group masquerades as a travelling theatre company, for whom a kidnapping attempt spirals into something much bigger.
- 10 **TIDUS (FFX, 2001)**
While *that* laughing scene in *FFX* is almost enough to make us hate him, we then remember that he's damn good at Blitzball and that he has an awesome sword. He just wants to go home. Is that really so much to ask?
- 11 **SHANTOTTO (FFXI, 2002)**
Another odd one in that there's no 'main' character in an MMO outside of the one you, the player, create and flesh out. So yeah, why not go for this cute little Tarutaru mage? She did have an expansion named after her, after all.
- 12 **VAAN (FFXII, 2006)**
It wasn't just the overhauled mechanics that made *Final Fantasy XII* a love-or-hate affair – it was the characters too. While this aspiring sky pirate might not be your favourite *FF* hero, Ivalice proved a joy to explore in his company.
- 13 **LIGHTNING (FFXIII, 2009)**
She's everywhere these days, so it's hard to believe that the franchise's princess is only four years old. Her second starring role is due next year – Square once said it wanted her to be a female Cloud, and we can't argue with that.

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NINJA GAIDEN Z

THE AGE-OLD QUESTION: NINJAS OR ZOMBIES?

The *Ninja Gaiden* series isn't exactly famous for its realism, with protagonist Ryu Hayabusa regularly battling all manner of demonic hellspawn, but *Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z* is pushing the boat out into very deep waters. Players control ninja Yaiba Kamikaze, an antagonist of Ryu killed in a previous fight with our regular hero. However, someone has bigger plans for Yaiba, and he finds himself resurrected as a cyborg by a mysterious organisation. Bent on taking out his revenge on Hayabusa, Yaiba must first deal with a zombie plague because... reasons. We don't know. It's all a bit silly, but that's totally the tone the game is going for. Between the comic book art style and the over-the-top gory action, this is *Ninja Gaiden* turned up to 11. ➤



✖ Yaiba uses extensive cel-shading in a style similar to *Killer Is Dead*.



✖ Tearing off zombie bits to use as weapons looks like gruesome fun.

It's got some serious pedigree behind it, too. Yaiba is being developed by Spark Unlimited – that most recently made *Lost Planet 3* – but overseen by Yosuke Hayashi, head of Team Ninja, and Keiji Inafune. You know, that guy who made *Mega Man* and *Dead Rising*. Inafune and Hayashi being on board is a major coup, and it's amazing how simple they make the premise sound.

"The start of it was that I wanted to make a game with ninjas and zombies," says Inafune. "I wanted to make a solid ninja game. As a Japanese developer, ninja games are one of the things that represent Japanese development. Bringing zombies into that mix, something that works really well in the West, would be the chance to have a really fun game that we couldn't just make in Japan."

"Within the genre of course, the top ninja action game is *Ninja Gaiden*. Everybody knows

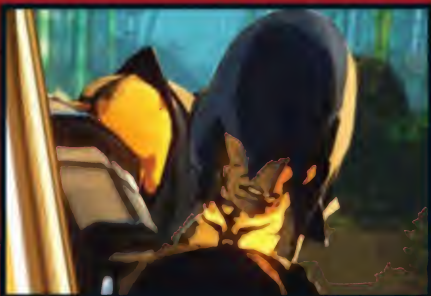
that game and if we could set this new ninja action game within the universe of *Ninja Gaiden* and still keep it its own thing, I thought that would be a great way to broaden the audience of ninja action games. Hopefully by teaming up with a Western developer to create it, some of that influence will rub off on the Japanese side as well and, in that sense, bring a little bit of energy back in the Japanese game scene."

The game is aiming for an early 2014 release on PS3 and there is still plenty to learn in the time until that point. What we do know is that ➤

"We think of Yaiba as its own thing. It takes place in the *Ninja Gaiden* world but we don't compare them"



✖ Ninjas vs zombies... it doesn't really seem fair.



✖ At least you can rest easy in the knowledge that it won't come back as a zombie plane.

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF... UNDEATH

You'll be cutting your way through hordes of standard, shambling zombies as Yaiba, but there are plenty of more outlandish types of re-risen corpses to contend with. From this artwork alone we've got fire zombies, electric zombies, soldier zombies, toxic zombies, biker zombies and a ruddy huge two-headed baby mutant monster zombie. Best of all, some of these special enemy types have parts that can be used as weapons, such as swinging a pair of arm stumps around like nunchaku or shooting fireballs out of a dead guy's mouth. Realism!



七大屍絵圖



Well, this has put us off ever having children.



Fire in the (zombie) disco!



Similarly to *Dead Rising*, *Yaiba* will have you cutting down hordes of zombies at once.



It will be fun to play as the bad guy for a change. Who cares about honour?

"I wanted to make a solid ninja game. As a Japanese developer, ninja games are one of the things that represent Japanese development"

so far it looks utterly insane, in a very good way. New cyborg-Yaiba is a force of nature, moving at crazy speeds and cutting down hordes of zombies without breaking a sweat. Parts of dead zombies can even be used as weapons, such as tearing off a big dude's arms and using them as 'Numb Chucks'. Cause enough chaos and Yaiba can trigger Bloodshed mode, making him even *more* deadly for a short period of time. It has to be seen to really understand the full effect – it's fluid, extremely fast and absurdly bloody.

That's all there is to it at this point. The focus seems more on fun than providing a hardcore challenge, although we'd bet money on some optional difficulty modes that ramp up the pain. It's all right up our alley, a mixture of tongue-in-cheek humour and brutal hack-and-slash gameplay that proves extremely satisfying to play. Inafune is hoping the mixture of Western and Japanese developers will create a game that everyone can enjoy.

"At the core it's creative people; game creators talking to each other," he says. "Of course, with a different

culture, you will bring some different perspectives. Western developers have different strengths and you have to be open to those strengths and bring them out of each other. Of course, there are inconveniences – it's a different culture, a different area physically – so it's easy to focus on the negatives and the problems. But we have to get past those and realise there's something better to be gained from that collaboration and really play on each other's strengths to create the best game you can."

Spark Unlimited doesn't have the best track record, responsible for average titles like *Legendary* and *Call Of Duty: Finest Hour*, but the tutelage of Inafune and Team Ninja seems to be working wonders. If there's one thing Team Ninja is good at, it's making a satisfying action game.

"The core of an action game is fairly simple – it's got to feel good," says Hayashi. "You push a button, perform an action and it's got to feel good. That's something that Team Ninja has worked really hard on through our history and we've gotten really good at. In *Yaiba* we can oversee the action



elements and give direction on the feel of the game, the feel of the action. We're really taking a close look at that and we have the director of *Ninja Gaiden* working on this as well and giving feedback. So that's probably the biggest thing we're directly contributing to *Yaiba*."

One gameplay demo ends with the introduction of a boss, and not just any boss – a giant, two-headed zombie baby riding a car like a buggy. Sure, why not?

"This was actually created by Spark and designed by Spark," explains Inafune. "It's their own idea. We don't think that's something a Japanese creator would make. This is definitely a product of the collaboration and working with a Western developer. We think that's one of the reasons it probably sticks with you because the image resonates with you. From the design to the way it comes on screen – this little baby riding this big car and it falls off and it gets mad – that whole sequence was all thought up by Spark."

Ninja Gaiden fans might be worried about what is going to happen to the series they love: is it taking a broad step into left field, never to return to the serious adventures of Ryu Hayabusa? Probably not. In fact, Hayashi is adamant that *Yaiba* is very much a standalone experience.

"From our end, we think of *Yaiba* as its own thing. It takes place in the *Ninja Gaiden* world but we don't try and compare them. *Yaiba* is *Yaiba*. Of course, Hayabusa appears here and there and we're checking the design for Hayabusa, the motion for Hayabusa, we need to make sure everything is correct. But other than that, we really want Spark and Mr Inafune to be free with their imaginations."

In that respect, the team has undoubtedly succeeded. Imagination runs through *Yaiba* like a knife, albeit a diseased one coated in zombie mutant baby brains. Add in the cel-shaded, comic book art style and *Yaiba* could yet turn out to be the game that many people wanted *Killer Is Dead* to be...

THE THINGS I'VE LEARNED

Keiji Inafune left Capcom a few years ago to start up his own company, Comcept. Here's his take on the key differences between the two studios...

"When I was at Capcom, I fought hard for people to be creative and to take risks but, within a larger organisation, you sometimes get numb to taking those risks. You are sort of protected by the organisation. Going independent and starting my own company, I realised that even I was still somewhat numb when I was at Capcom."

"I think for a creator to be creative, they need to take risks and they need to be out there and willing to take those risks and be willing to fail. Starting my own company, I had all of that risk. My company lives or dies on how we run the company. I realised going independent just how sensitive I need to be and how much more it takes to really push to take those risks and what those risks can mean to the company itself. You could fail. You have to be okay with that. You're also fighting as hard as you can to make that not happen."

"You really need to make sure when you're independent that you're bringing all of that energy to that fight on your own because you don't have a big company to project it. Companies will take risks but they generally don't put the risks on individuals within the company. They don't make them take that risk themselves. When you're independent, it is your own risk that you have to take on personally. So that feeling and sense of determination is something that I've really felt after leaving Capcom."



REVIEWS

We play games and give them a score

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Grand Theft Auto V

It's the biggest name in modern gaming for a reason



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Developer
Rockstar North
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Players
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Genre
Open World
Age Rating
18
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Hype is a dangerous thing. While it's important for publishers and developers to generate a buzz in the community, it's all too easy for such pre-launch excitement to wind up setting the bar impossibly high. So in the case of GTA V, we can only assume that said bar is somewhere out in the stratosphere. Yet somehow, Rockstar has managed to come good on every promise, deliver in every department and create what will surely go down as a generation-defining game. Believe the hype – GTA V is exceptional.

We've been so very patient up to this point, and Rockstar kindly acknowledges this with an almost immediate start to gameplay. You'll learn the ropes and get a feel for the refined controls over the course of an explosive opening mission, although in typical Rockstar fashion, extra mechanics and features are drip-fed over the course of the entire game. Not all of them find their way into the main story missions, either – if you want to see everything the game has to offer, you're going to need to go out of your way and work for it. There's no story mission that introduces you to the simple tennis mini-game, for instance

(or, as we've dubbed it, *Rockstar Presents Normal Tennis*), nor ones that demand that you win big on the stock market or street racing circuit. The only stuff you'll see over the course of the story is gameplay relevant to the three main characters and both their individual and collective plights, which makes a nice change for the genre.

But rush and you'll only ruin the experience for yourself. This is single malt, 90 proof open-world gaming – it's designed to be savoured and enjoyed, sipped rather than slammed back in one go. Missions are designed to leave you in areas you might not otherwise have explored yet, while swapping to one of the other characters usually drops you in either locations or situations perfect

We cut to Trevor, only to find him passed out and drunk on an island, wearing a dress and surrounded by dead bodies

for promoting emergent gameplay. We once cut across to Trevor only to find him passed out and drunk on an island, wearing a dress and surrounded by dead bodies – naturally, we wanted to follow the trail of breadcrumbs and find out what happened here, so a good 15 minutes went into clue-hunting and exploration. It's crazy how often situations like these present themselves and almost every time a new vehicle, mechanic or weapon is introduced, you'll just want to take time out to mess around with it. Do it. It's almost always worth it. And in any case, playing around only helps to build up each character's stats which will come in handy on the tricky run of later missions, so you can always just use that as an excuse, if you even need one. You don't need one.

Pastimes and activities aren't the only thing to have been shunted off away from the main narrative, either. While Michael's dysfunctional family, Trevor's psychosis and Franklin's incompetent companions all serve up laughs (if perhaps not in equal measure), much of the playful silliness has been pushed into side missions and optional extras. It makes sense in context – this is basically a game revolving around a series of huge heists, after all – and means that there are amusing moments throughout the campaign (it's still incredibly well-written, for the most part) but plenty more proper laugh-out-loud-funny ones waiting off the beaten path.

The series' trademark satire is still everywhere, mind, and the radio hosts and brilliantly observed TV shows and movies are funnier than ever – we particularly recommend tuning into *Fame Or Shame*

when you get a chance, just to see Rockstar's brilliantly twisted take on reality talent shows and hear an absolutely incredible song. It's totally worth it. Hell, we wasted hours just chilling in front of the TV and we don't regret a thing. From the Spümcø-esque adventures of Liberal superhero Impotent Rage to the brilliant cop shows and ridiculous adverts, it's definitely worth taking some time out. The same dark humour is absolutely everywhere online, and you don't even need to visit a TW@ internet cafe to enjoy it this time – it's all right there on your smartphone. Play the stock market, which actually reacts to in-game and online events; update your LifeInvader profile and see what others have posted on your wall based on missions and activities in-game; see what's happening on pointless comment >



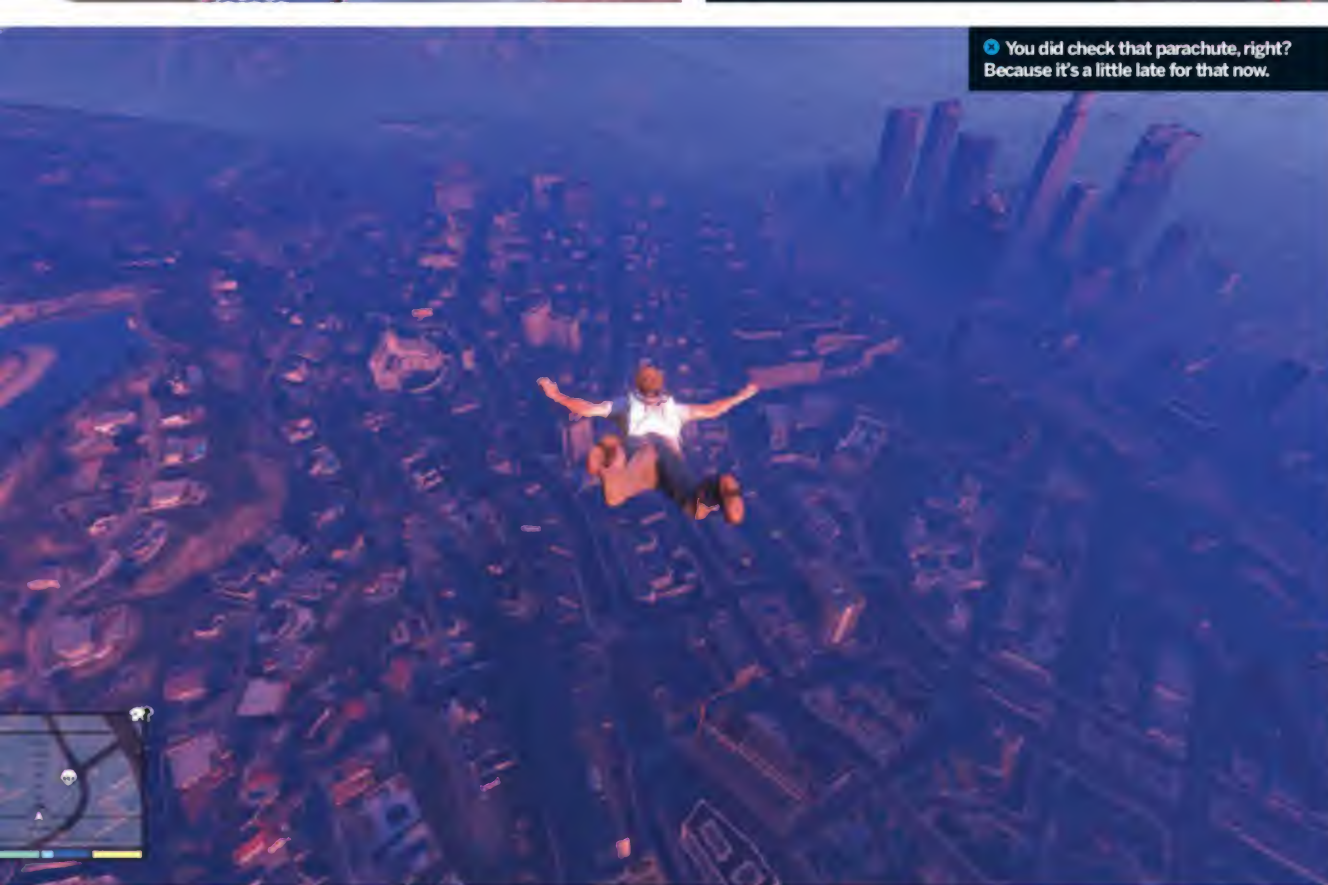


One of these buses is about to explode. And no, we won't tell you which one.



Okay, Michael, he's your son. But that doesn't change the fact that Jimmy is a bit of a dick...

You did check that parachute, right? Because it's a little late for that now.



THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Train Chop and pimp rides on your phone or tablet

IF YOU'VE GOT an iPhone or iPad, you'll be able to turn that disobedient pooch Chop into a good little boy with ease. It's like some kind of weird ghetto Tamagotchi, feeding and playing with your doggy friend improving your bond with him in the actual game. You can even teach him tricks and obedience commands, as well as training him to sniff out hidden collectibles for you. Which is useful, because those things are bloody well hidden. Elsewhere on the app, you can also customise cars without having to drag your ass all the way to Los Santos Customs, which is all kinds of handy. And pretty cool.



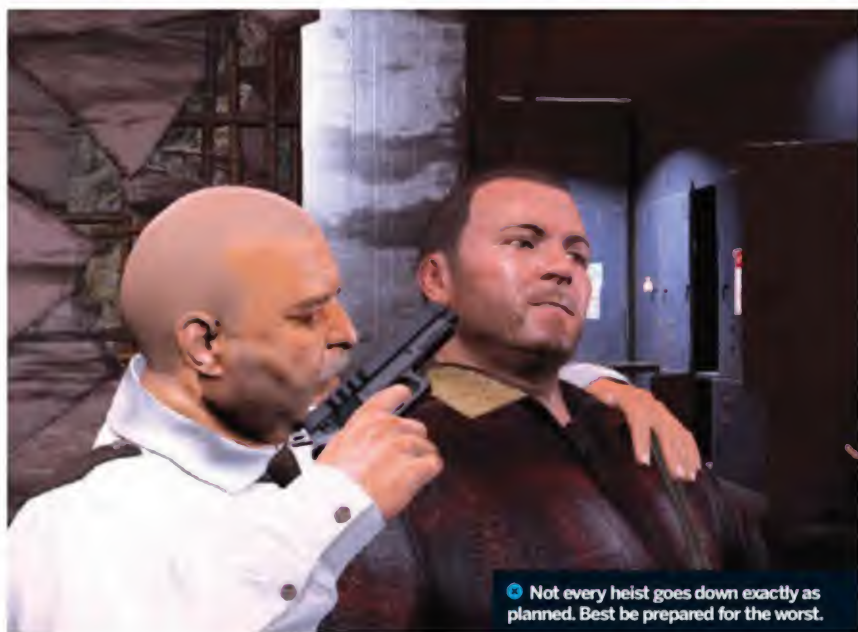
REVIEW



Michael can go for therapy at any time, discussing all his recent misadventures.



Lamar drops the N bomb more times in a single sentence than every other character in every game ever combined.



Not every heist goes down exactly as planned. Best be prepared for the worst.



We can think of plenty of better times for Britney Spears to come on the radio...





It's designed to be savoured and enjoyed, sipped rather than slammed back in one go

And with everything you do, you're adding more activities

> board Bleeter, which doesn't even need a 140-character explanation. You can even join cults, personal improvement schemes and dating sites if you know where to look, plus some of it is actually useful too – one missions asks you to sabotage an estate agent's business, the only clue to his activity being a listing of properties on his website. Genius.

And to be honest, most of the play area would be considered 'off the beaten path' anyway. It's huge, the city itself a sprawling urban expanse that sits at the bottom of the gigantic map while several towering mountain ranges punctuate the desert above, with dusty hick settlements, backwater coastal towns and rolling plains still ruled by nature all just waiting to be explored. And that's before you embrace the game's vastly enhanced verticality, with the expected aerial antics joined by proper underwater exploration. It's far more than just a deep blue abyss down there – sunken ships, crashed planes and ditched cars all lie buried on the sea bed and, while you'll never reach them with just the air in your lungs, a set of scuba gear will help you scavenge the cash, weapon caches and other treasures that never made it to their final destinations.

It certainly helps that *GTA V* looks incredible, too. Weather and lighting effects are staggering, draw distances put every other game in the series to shame while the sense of activity and life in the city is second to none. Whether you're zapping between characters at street level or soaring above Los Santos, the bustle of city life is absolutely incredible and spills over into gameplay, with random events such as muggings, robberies, carjacking and cop chases going on all the time should you see fit to save the day or even help yourself to someone else's big score. Every now and then, you'll just find yourself staring out over the city in awe – head up to the Vinewood sign at dawn and you'll see exactly what we mean. Your first flight is not something you'll forget in a hurry, the ludicrous draw distance making just cruising around in the sky a delight.

and options to the map and inviting more crazies to send you off on wild goose chases – Los Santos is swamped in things to do, places to go and ways to blow the fleeting fortunes that come from a successful job. LA (or rather Los Santos) is the perfect backdrop for this tale of the American dream gone wrong, the contrast between rich and poor never clearer than when you're cruising through Vinewood with slums on one side and mansions on the other. Rockstar is typically stingy with the drip-feed of new ways to enjoy Los Santos, but *V* is a lot friendlier than most other *GTA* games in this respect – while grabbing a plane or a chopper in the first few hours is still unlikely, good things come to those who wait. And kill people. And steal stuff. That's kind of how the game works.

So it looks amazing, plays better than ever in every respect (handling and gunplay are both hugely improved), is set in a huge and busy world and features better attention to detail than more or less any other game – where else can you relax after a tough heist with cartoons and a cigar? Scour every nook and cranny in the city and you still won't find a single place where Rockstar skimped on detail. The soundtrack's great, the humour superb and there's loads to do, which only gets even more ridiculous when you consider that this is only half the game – the rest comes when *GTA Online* launches which, at the time of going to press, hasn't happened yet.

We said it once and we'll say it again: believe the hype.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Gigantic and stupidly detailed, *GTA V* is everything we hoped it would be. Individual components could be a touch better, but when a game does literally everything, nobody can expect perfection across the board. That it even comes close is incredible.

97%

The motion capture tech leads to some incredibly realistic animations.



FRANKLIN, MICHAEL, TREVOR AND YOU

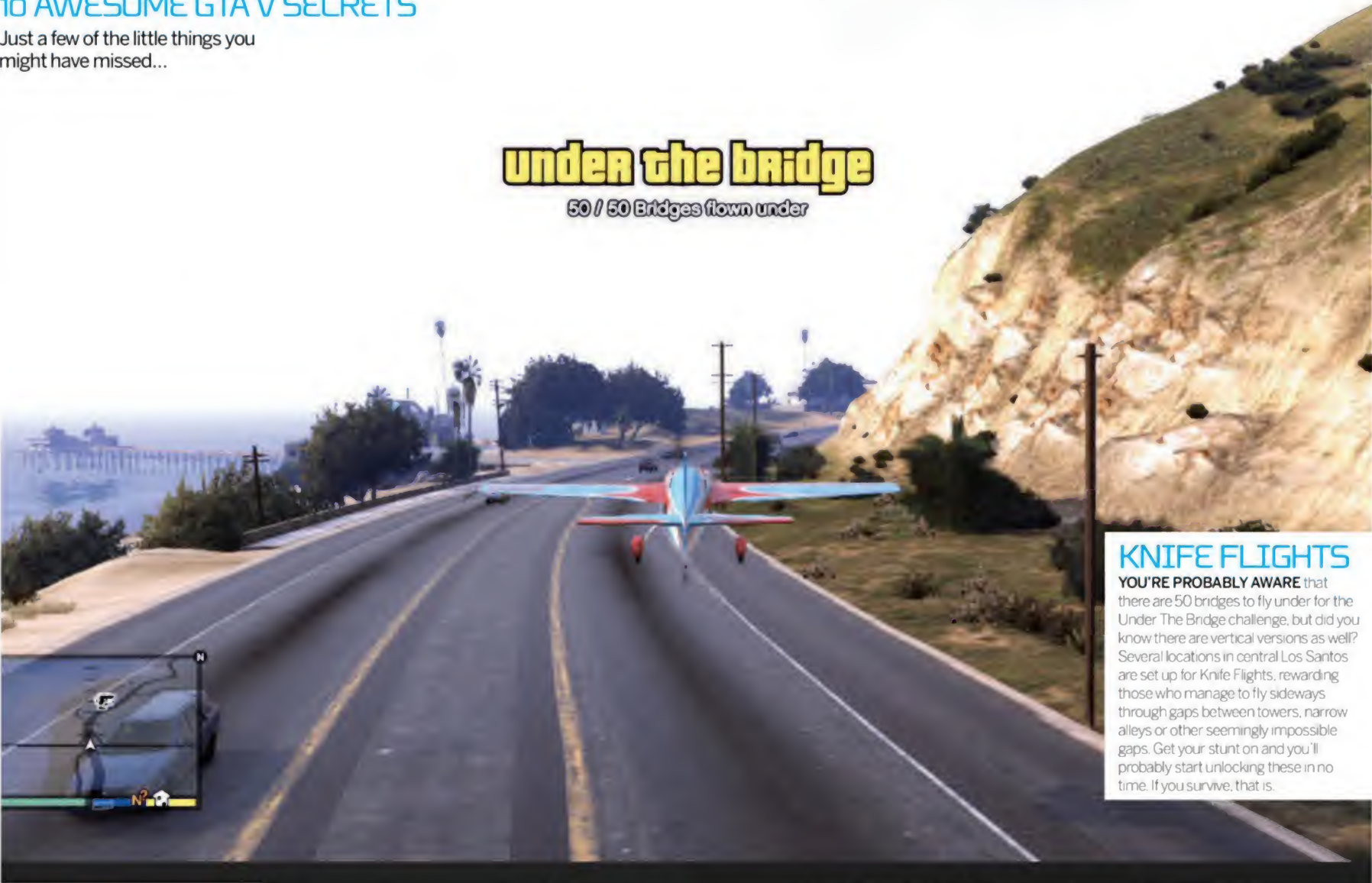
Put yourself in the game with *GTA Online*

SADLY, THIS ISSUE of *Play* went to press before the launch of *GTA Online*, so we've yet to see if the multiplayer component of the game can live up to its amazing potential. But given how strong every mechanic and component of the core game is, we find it hard to believe that *GTA Online* won't be just as incredible. It's basically a whole new story mode but through the eyes of your own custom character, levelling up skills and making a name for yourself while interacting with and befriending many of the characters involved in the main storyline. More on this next issue, if we can stop playing it long enough to write something about it.



10 AWESOME GTA V SECRETS

Just a few of the little things you might have missed...



KNIFE FLIGHTS

YOU'RE PROBABLY AWARE that there are 50 bridges to fly under for the Under The Bridge challenge, but did you know there are vertical versions as well? Several locations in central Los Santos are set up for Knife Flights, rewarding those who manage to fly sideways through gaps between towers, narrow alleys or other seemingly impossible gaps. Get your stunt on and you'll probably start unlocking these in no time. If you survive, that is.

ONLINE DATING

ROCKSTAR'S INTERPRETATION OF the internet is huge, though not all of it is obviously accessible from the front page. Dig around in the back end (the Random button might help, if it decides to play nice) and you can find all kinds of seedy filth, including a particularly grotty dating site. Pay the extortionate sign-up fee and you're free to send messages to anyone who takes your fancy, and who knows? They might even get back to you if they like what they see.



CULTS

EVER FELT LIKE something was missing in your life? Make new friends and give your existence new meaning by joining one of several groups that may or may not be barmy cults and forcing your new beliefs on others! Joining is as simple as visiting the relevant website and usually paying through the nose for the privilege of enlightenment – some even have their own special missions as well.



COLD CALLS

IF YOU SELECT Contacts from your phone then hit the Square button, you'll enter free dial mode. We're sure there are countless Easter Eggs hidden behind this wall of numbers but, even on a basic level, there's fun to be had with it – try dialling some of the numbers you see on billboards or TV, or hear on the radio, and see what you find. You might be pleasantly surprised.



SECRET MESSAGES

GOT THE COLLECTOR'S EDITION? Lucky you – there's some sweet swag in that big ol' box. Even a game this huge can't contain all the secrets Rockstar wanted to cram into the game, meaning some spill out onto the CE map. Take a UV light to it and you'll see what we mean. Hidden in invisible ink are a number of locations where you can make easy money or find rare vehicles, while there's a even a set of instructions to reach a particular location.

HIDDEN PACKAGES

THERE MIGHT NOT be a fixed number of Hidden Packages to find this time around, but that doesn't mean they're gone for good. In *GTA V*, they tend to take the form of underwater caches – weapons, money and armour can be found in scuppered vehicles on the sea bed, steel briefcases glinting in what little light there is. You never know exactly what you'll find. Who says swimming is boring?



MAKING FRIENDS

HEAD TO A strip club and approach (or be approached by) any of the lovely ladies and you'll have the option to get a private dance. During your time in the VIP area, flirting with or touching the ladies will increase how much they like you and when their bar fills up, you'll have the option to take them home. After this, your new friend will send you sexy pictures from time to time. Classy.

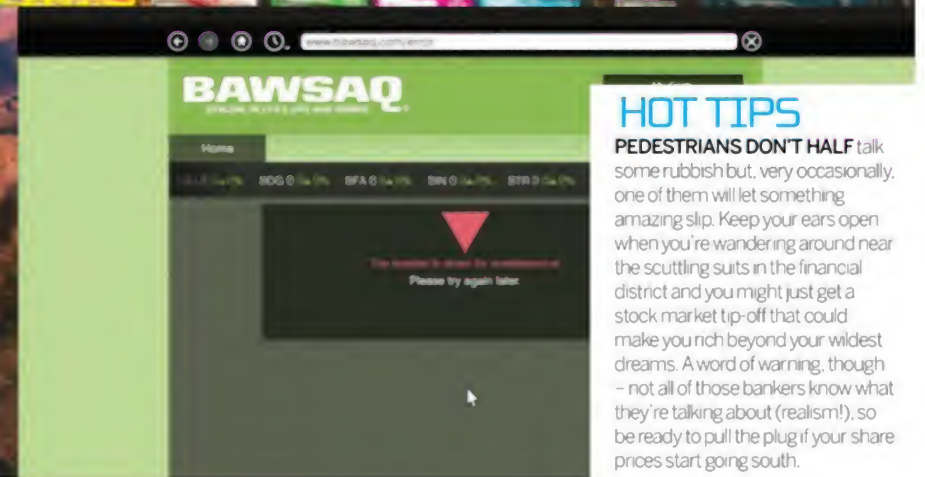


PETTY CRIME

HEISTS MIGHT BE the most elaborate form of robbery in the game but that doesn't mean you can't go back to basics. Many of the small stores around the map can be held up for a quick cashflow boost and, while they tend to be poorly defended, the tills don't exactly hold a fortune. Get in and out fast, too – armed robbery is an easy shortcut to a high wanted level...

ARMY BASE

THE IN-GAME MAP is pretty good at telling you where everything is, but it's not entirely accurate. One glaring omission is the secret army base, so well hidden that it doesn't show up on the map at all. It can be found on the Western coast of the map, just over halfway up – if you want to get your hands on an attack chopper or maybe even a tank but don't mind getting an instant three-star Wanted level, go check it out.



HOT TIPS

PEDESTRIANS DON'T HALF talk some rubbish but, very occasionally, one of them will let something amazing slip. Keep your ears open when you're wandering around near the scuttling suits in the financial district and you might just get a stock market tip-off that could make you rich beyond your wildest dreams. A word of warning, though – not all of those bankers know what they're talking about (realism!), so be ready to pull the plug if your share prices start going south.

RELEASE DATE: 11 OCTOBER

Beyond: Two Souls

Ellen Page meets David Cage



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer
Entertainment
Developer
Quantic Dream
Price
£39.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Adventure
Age Rating
16+



How interactive does something have to be to become, as David Cage describes his games, "interactive fiction"? Does holding forward on an analog stick count? Occasionally pressing a button? Hell, following that thread of logic, is turning the pages of a book enough to consider it 'interactive'? The simple truth is that some people will never see what Cage makes as a 'game' and, as such, *Beyond: Two Souls* is a hard thing to review. Mechanically, this is almost identical to *Heavy Rain*, so if you had no time for that, you'll be just as bored with this one.

For those unacquainted, what that means is that *Beyond* is essentially a modern day version of *Dragon's Lair*: an interactive movie that you affect through Quick-Time Events, dialogue choices and the occasional puzzle. Players of last year's *The Walking Dead* series should feel quite at home, too.

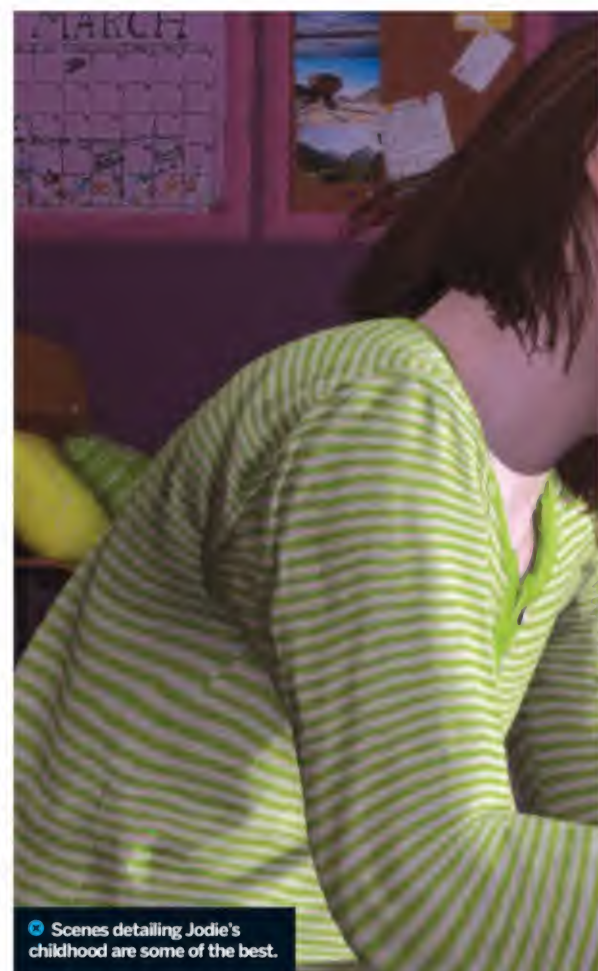
Players control Jodie Holmes, played by tiny Hollywood starlet Ellen Page, as the game charts her life from a small child to a young adult. Jodie has a special ability: a link to an otherworldly entity, constantly nearby, that only she can see and hear. His name is Aiden, and the powers he grants Jodie cause her to be taken to live in a lab facility from a young age. Jodie's life is anything but normal.

Having Ellen Page on board is a decent coup that lends the game some real star power, an element that *Heavy Rain* noticeably lacked. That's not all, as old favourite Willem Dafoe also stars as professor and surrogate father figure Nathan Dawkins.

Extensive motion capture has recorded their every move, and the result is a game that looks just as fantastic as its predecessor. Environments sometimes leave a bit to be desired and, if you look hard enough, some of the cracks are starting to show, but these are still some of the most realistic looking human beings on the PS3. That isn't to say it's perfect. Jodie looks consistently excellent, but some other characters can lack detail and a convincing range of expressions. Animations in particular are still not quite there, characters moving like puppets and never breaking free of the uncanny valley. This is one of the best looking games on PS3, but now we've all seen next-gen, the limitations of this one are more apparent.

Beyond features more direct character control than *Heavy Rain*, ostensibly making it more of a real game. Jodie moves with the left stick, players no longer needing to hold down a shoulder button to make her move forward. The problem is, she handles like a tank. Not since the original *Resident Evil* games do we remember handling this infuriating and unwieldy. A terrible camera doesn't help, often pointing wherever the hell it wants and taking forever to manoeuvre back into the right position. Most of these sections don't last long and consist merely of walking to the next plot point, but they still handle like crap.

The biggest new feature is controlling Aiden. A press of Triangle instantly switches control from Jodie to her ghostly counterpart who can fly about



Scenes detailing Jodie's childhood are some of the best.

at will – including through objects – but cannot stray too far. Aiden can interact with parts of the environment and certain people, and it is here that most of the game's puzzles lie. Elements that Aiden can interact with are marked, so nothing is ever too taxing, but there are a few pleasant brain-scratchers. The mechanics are quite transparent, with Aiden only able to possess specific people for reasons never explained, but examining the options available and deducing the right way to advance is enjoyable enough.

Otherwise, it plays the same as *Heavy Rain*, to the extent that the button prompts during Quick-Time Events are exactly the same. There seem to be less of them in *Beyond*, with a larger amount of time spend walking or watching, but there are several nonetheless. A new method of control involves flicking the right stick in the correct

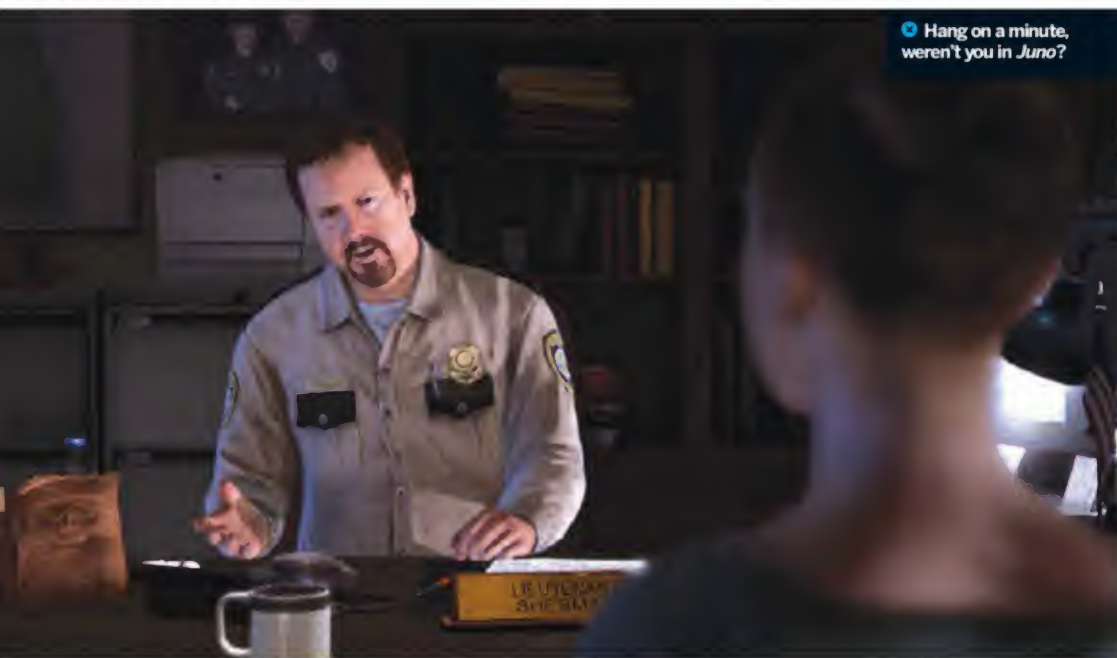
Beyond features more character control than Heavy Rain, ostensibly making it more of a real game



Turn that frown upside down, it's Christmas!



At no point does Willem Dafoe turn into the Green Goblin. Sorry.



direction during fights, but the direction intended is never displayed, the player meant to discern it from the action taking place. Unfortunately, it can often be difficult to figure out which direction the game wants you to press.

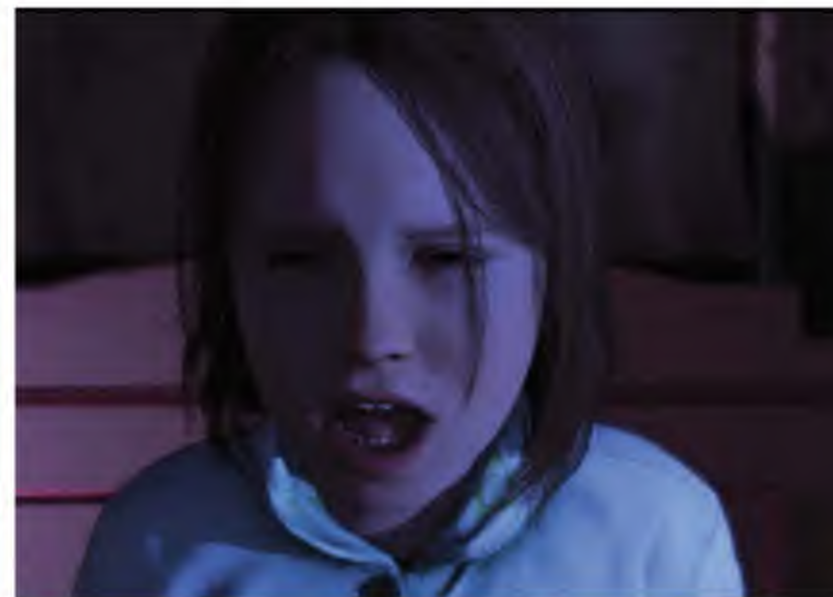
So, as a game, *Beyond* is the same deal as *Heavy Rain*. You barely play it, but that's the point, and whether that's okay or not is up to you. The point of *Beyond: Two Souls* is to tell a story, so let's critique it on that in particular.

If *Heavy Rain* was a small indie flick, an intimate human drama (albeit one with a serial killer), *Beyond* is David Cage making a Hollywood blockbuster, a supernatural epic in the vein of Spielberg or (shudder) Michael Bay. What this results in is a tale with a vision perhaps beyond what Cage's abilities allow.

The narrative is nonlinear in structure, players experiencing little sections of Jodie's life out of chronological order. It's an ambitious approach but one that pays off, as slowly filling in the gaps

and seeing the whole picture is an intriguing hook. Seeing everything gone wrong is going to make you want to find out how it happened, and *Beyond* is great at creating such set-ups. A small issue with this method of storytelling is that the characters often know things the player has not yet been made privy to. It's not a deal breaker, but a relatively cheap way of maintaining mystery. It's not something the characters are yet to figure out, it's just something the game hasn't told you yet.

It's a problem indicative of the whole game, and David Cage in general. Cage has always excelled at creating feeling and mood, aping the presentation of the movies he loves so much, but when it comes to creating compelling, watertight plots, he seems less capable. It's a problem we saw in *Heavy Rain*, an intriguing story with huge promise let down by enormous plot holes and circumstantial events. *Beyond* looks and sounds the part, >

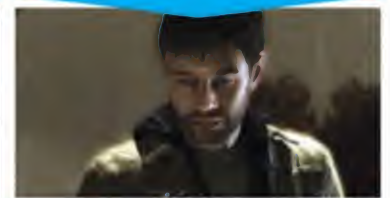


CAGE FIGHT

Heavy Rain vs Beyond: Only one can win!

BEYOND

HEAVY RAIN



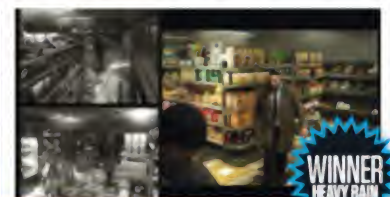
ROUND 1: GRAPHICS

Both look excellent, but the three years since *Heavy Rain* and the advances in motion capture give *Beyond* the edge. Some of the characters look simply excellent.



ROUND 2: GAMEPLAY

There isn't much to speak of in either game, but the increased character control and fun Aiden puzzles in *Beyond* at least make it more of a 'real' game than its predecessor.



ROUND 3: STORY

Both games suffer from plot holes and deus ex machina twists, but the tense serial killer countdown of *Heavy Rain* is more compelling than the sci-fi action flick *Beyond* becomes.



ROUND 4: REPLAY VALUE

Beyond is longer but has less variables that effect the ending, whereas *Heavy Rain* gives the player more choice but takes less time to see everything. The two are pretty even.

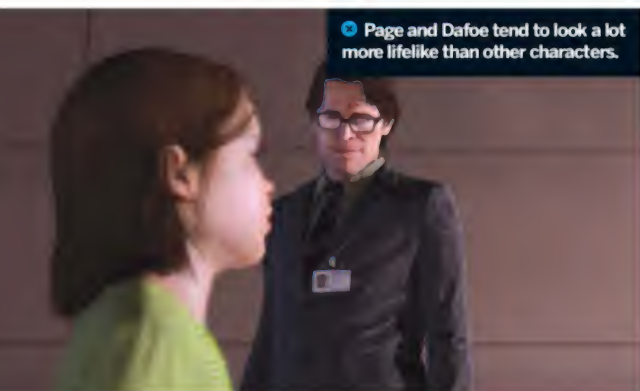


ROUND 5: JASON

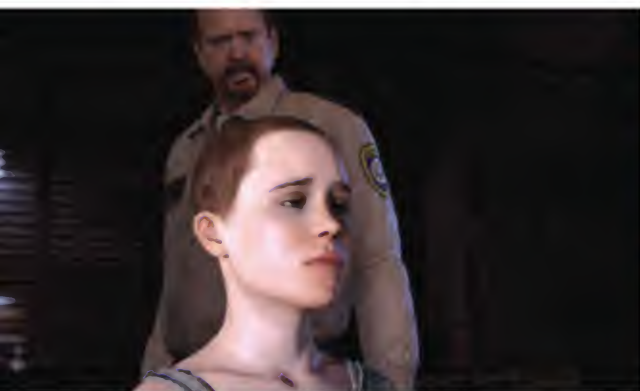
JASON? JAAASON?!? JASON! Has anyone seen my son?



REVIEW



Page and Dafoe tend to look a lot more lifelike than other characters.



It's unfortunate that controlling Jodie is so unwieldy. She moves like a tank.



SWAT ain't no match for an angry psychic ghost thing.



Cage has always excelled at scene-setting, with mysterious atmospheric shots like this.



The homeless chapter is the game's strongest point, telling a great little self-contained story.



> with a big, bombastic soundtrack that wouldn't feel out of place in any Hollywood blockbuster. But the story is a mish-mash of hundreds of different influences, cribbed together into something that tries so hard to convince but ends up feeling slightly hollow.

To begin with, *Beyond* tells a relatively low-key story, and this is when it is best. Early scenes of Jodie as a child learning to deal with Aiden and the trouble he creates excel at developing her character and situation. Forced to live in an experimental facility with her every move monitored, her loneliness and desire to be 'normal' are emotions anyone who remembers adolescence will be able to sympathise with.

This is what Cage does best, create emotional situations and characters on a small scale that players can relate to and empathise with. A later chapter follows a homeless Jodie, now a young adult, as she struggles to survive. It's undoubtedly the high point of the game, full of likable characters and gut-wrenchingly depressing situations that hit close to home. It's

The whole thing is very po-faced and takes itself extremely seriously

no coincidence that it's also the chapter with the least action and supernatural elements.

As Jodie grows up and gets drafted into the CIA thanks to her special powers, the whole thing takes a turn into the bizarre, Jodie morphing into an action hero thanks to extensive training. Perhaps it's due to the quick transition, but the whole thing just feels unbelievable, and when you are struggling with the controls as *Beyond* tries to be an action game with Jodie dodging bullets in Somalia, you'll wonder what happened to the emotional drama of those first hours.

Things get really supernatural and bizarre, the game jumping the shark somewhere around the point of a chapter set in the Arizona desert that has absolutely no impact on the overall plot whatsoever. By the end, *Beyond* descends into typical Hollywood action with a bunch of nonsense sci-fi buzzwords and little emotional



stake. This might be what David Cage was going for, but the shift in tone from the start of the game is so huge that it never stops being jarring and drastically alters the overall experience.

It doesn't help that the whole thing is very po-faced and takes itself extremely seriously. A bit of self-referential humour can help an audience buy into a nonsensical and poorly explained situation, but there is none to be found here. The player simply has to accept what is presented to them, regardless of explanation.

It results in a story that becomes less involving the more 'epic' it gets. There is more intensity in *Heavy Rain*'s infamous 'finger' scene than there is in any of *Beyond*'s huge theatrics.

Beyond also seems to have less narrative choice than *Heavy Rain*, with your ending being mainly decided by a couple of large decisions toward the very end of the game. Choices up to that point can affect the specifics of your current situation, but the end result is rarely affected. Again, it's similar to *The Walking Dead*: the end destination is the same, but how you got there might be a bit different to someone else.

It's also quite long, taking a solid ten hours, if not more. Completionists will want to see every variable and different outcome, and for them there is a fair amount of replay value here.

Ultimately, *Beyond: Two Souls* is David Cage taking his *Heavy Rain* formula for another spin with more star power, more spectacle and more action. Whether that sounds like a good thing or not depends on taste, but the fact is that Cage's vision of a playable Summer blockbuster is never quite realised. If you thought *Heavy Rain* could do with more ghosts, *Beyond* is for you, but for many of us the shine is beginning to wear off.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

Technically and graphically impressive, *Beyond* tells a story that never grips in the quite the same way as its predecessor. There's still nothing quite like it, but David Cage clearly has trouble writing a concise, believable story and it shows.

70%



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

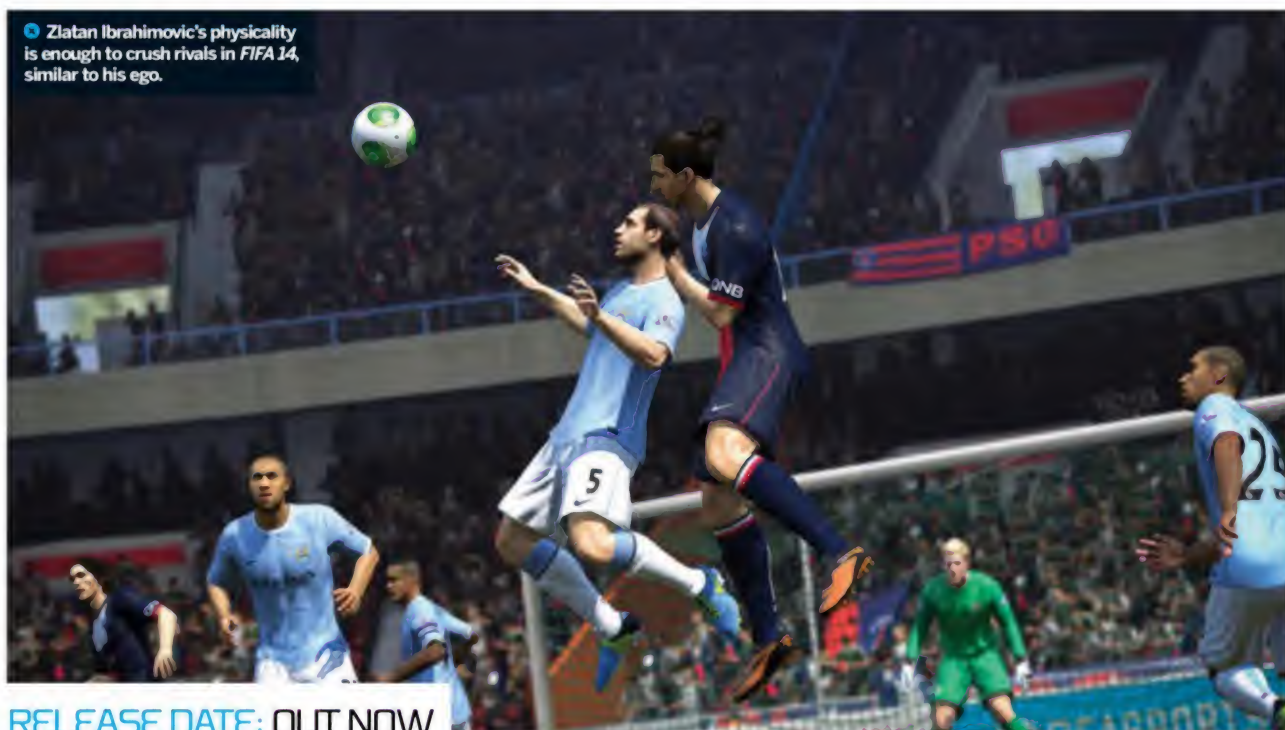
What's Quantic Dream did next

DAVID CAGE'S FRENCH studio recently created *The Dark Sorcerer*, a tech demo for the PlayStation 4 that was shown off the console reveal event and again at Sony's E3 conference. Starting off in a dark fantasy setting, the demo eventually pans back to reveal the 'studio' where it is all being filmed, the comedic tone a departure from Cage's normal malaise. Whether a game will come out of the 12-minute video is unknown, but the studio has confirmed it is working on a PS4 game. A sequel to an existing property or something entirely new? One thing is for sure – knowing these guys, it's almost certainly going to look really pretty.

REVIEW



• Zlatan Ibrahimovic's physicality is enough to crush rivals in FIFA 14, similar to his ego.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

FIFA 14

The beautiful game becomes even more beautiful



DETAILS

Publisher
Electronic Arts
Developer
EA Canada
Price
£39.99
Players
1-22
Genre
Sports
Age Rating
3+
Website
www.easports.com/uk/fifa
Twitter
@EASPORTSFIFA
Facebook
facebook.com/easportsfifa



Imagine a world where Liverpool let Luis Suarez leave. After weeks of public bickering between the munchy striker and Brendan Rodgers, the Uruguayan forces a move to anywhere but Merseyside. At the same time, Wayne Rooney is offloaded from Manchester United and Chelsea snap up Robert Lewandowski for a stint at Stamford Bridge.

Business in FIFA 14's Career Mode may be dramatic, and certainly pokes fun at a summer transfer window that failed to deliver on its promise, but it sums up EA Canada's next release rather succinctly.

Just as you identify targets to improve specific areas of your squad, rival bosses look to do the same. EA want you to make key decisions in a tactical title that promotes the use of well-rounded teams and individual strategy. No longer can you place 11 speedsters on the pitch and expect to pace-abuse your way towards the net.

This realisation affects the action in a huge way. FIFA has long been referred to as the 'realistic' simulation in its eternal battle against *Pro Evolution Soccer*, but the gameplay in recent iterations hasn't matched

In Ultimate Team, the realisation that you'll never afford that shiny Gareth Bale card also comes rushing back quicker than the Welsh winger can shout 'hala Madrid!'

such a description. Pace overpowered all, physical players had their attributes docked and tactics took a back seat.

FIFA 14 lets gamers develop their own brand of football and strives to ensure each virtual player holds his own value. Finally, the lumbering legs of Per Mertesacker can halt forwards who used to stroll beyond his position. Weighty players now have the arsenal to match those who bounce off with significant contact. While pulling the opposition's shirt is a useful option, an increased sense of physicality means battles within each match are natural and, most importantly, even.

Such a tweak is emphasised when trying to keep possession. On any difficulty above Professional, FIFA 14 tests your ability to maintain control. Patience is key as short passes help to relieve pressure that is far more imposing than in previous versions. Opposition midfielders avidly close space and

defenders intelligently track runs to ensure there is no quick getaway.

Passes no longer robotically ping towards your colleagues with pinpoint accuracy. The ball needs to be thoughtfully distributed, as tiny taps of X provide little power, while holding the button sends the dome racing with real intention. Direction must be precise if you're going to hold onto possession in a system that feels like it has been designed as a Pep Guardiola training exercise.

Gameplay is incredibly slick and gives football fans a formula that feels fair, but animation is a mixed bag. Although your teammates' ability to make runs in anticipation of attacking moves is extremely useful, it often appears as if players are stuck on rails when doing so.

For every brilliantly animated diving save, there's a slightly unnatural twist and turn of the body which reminds everyone this isn't a Saturday afternoon broadcast brought to you

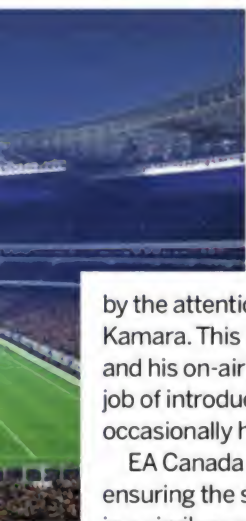


• Shakhtar Donetsk and the club's Donbass Arena make a much-anticipated appearance this year.





Never stare directly into Mario Balotelli's eyes.



by the attention-grabbing moustache of Chris Kamara. This isn't an "unbelievable" problem, and his on-air buddy Jeff Stelling does a good job of introducing each match, but it does occasionally hinder the match day experience.

EA Canada has put a lot of work into ensuring the sounds of game day don't stutter in a similar way. Whether you prefer to chant U-N-I-T-E-D at Old Trafford or sing *You'll Never Walk Alone* at Anfield, famous atmospheres have been added to increase intensity. Home crowds react to saved shots and make you feel like a hero when hitting the back of the net, while scoring an away goal has the power to silence a previously deafening crowd.

The updated chatter between Martin Tyler and Alan Smith also adds to encounters that manage to feel unique. In Career Mode, you'll certainly notice the difference between facing Everton at Goodison Park and taking Barcelona for a run at Camp Nou.

Aside from hunting offline glory, *FIFA 14* is crammed with other activities to enjoy. Skill

games return and are tougher than ever, as is online competitive play in modes such as Pro Clubs. In Ultimate Team, the realisation that you'll never afford that shiny Gareth Bale card also comes rushing back quicker than the Welsh winger can shout 'hala Madrid!'

EA Canada has mastered the ability of including something for everyone, but this year, proceedings on the pitch are where *FIFA 14* makes a real difference. With the battle between pace and power tightened, passing freedom granted and incredible match day authenticity to experience, the series continues to edge closer to the real sport. If you take time to explore tactical nuances and the advantages of building a diverse team, it also emerges as both the most challenging and rewarding entry into a franchise that is, despite its appearance, evolving rapidly.

With the PS4 transition approaching in November, *FIFA 14* exits the current generation in match-winning form. At just one 2,125,000th of the sum Real Madrid paid for Bale, it also offers terrific value for money.

Nick Akerman

VERDICT

Major alterations on the pitch allow players to develop their own style of football in a challenging manner. With the effectiveness of pace finally quashed, *FIFA 14* offers a wonderful package that rewards those who are willing to adjust to it.

90%

In this series



FIFA 13 Issue 223
This year's *FIFA* shows clear signs of improvement over the last game. 82%



Jostling for the ball allows skill and power to battle fairly. Have you got the ability to escape with the ball?



Through balls are hugely effective, especially now your teammates actively keep up with play.



Man-marking plays a more important role this time round.

ULTIMATE TEAM FINALLY GETS STYLE

Time to hide your wallet once more

ECHOING THE ONE-CLUB careers of Ryan Giggs and Steven Gerrard, Ultimate Team now rewards loyalty. A deeper chemistry system bypasses the need to pay for formation items, as any squad can be quickly altered without the hassle of needing to spend. For once, it's worth giving your team the opportunity to gel before selling up.

Added to this, FUT Chemistry Styles allow you to specialise the role of individual players. This provides the opportunity for you to slightly increase certain attributes of a player for the role he is intended. For example, deploying Marouane Fellaini on either defensive or attacking duties will see his vital stats adjust accordingly. You may have exactly the same team as your opponent, but they could play in a completely different manner.



Ultimate Team is back. Time to remortgage the house.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Killzone: Mercenary

Get rich or die trying



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony
Developer
Guerrilla Cambridge
Price
£34.99
Players
1-8
Genre
FPS
Age Rating
18+
Website
killzone.com
Twitter
@Killzone
Facebook
facebook.com/
KillzoneDotCom



Considering that Vita was designed to offer both the raw processing power and the control layout to be able to pull off console-style big-budget shooters, it's frankly ridiculous that it has taken this long for a developer to get it right. Following a disappointing showing from *Resistance* (especially after the outstanding third game on PS3) and an inexcusably poor version of the biggest shooter on the planet in *Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified*, it's fallen to Sony to show the world what its handheld powerhouse can really do. And on both technical and tactile levels, Guerrilla's second studio has absolutely knocked it out of the park.

First and most obviously, the game looks ludicrously good. Art design and lighting are both stunning, as is the sense of scale – something that so often must be sacrificed in order to get portable shooters looking great and running fine. Concessions have been made in terms of map sizes, but these play perfectly to the strengths of the game's structure. This is, at heart, a score attack game, each small level designed to be run multiple times in search of greater profit for more skilful play. After

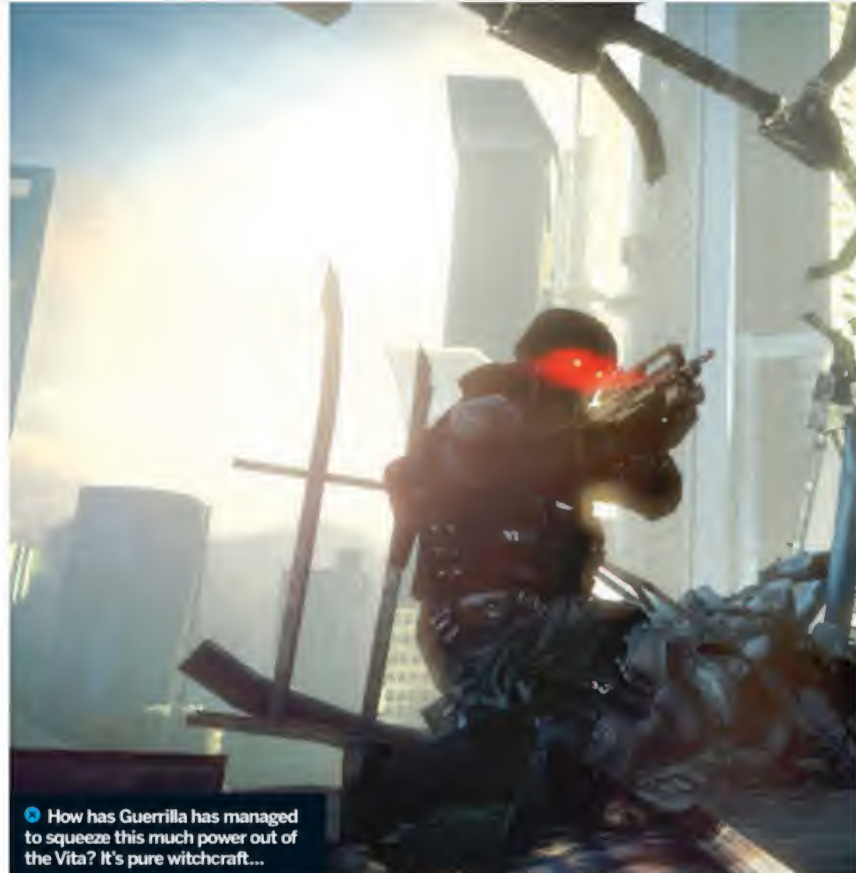
your first run through a campaign mission, you'll unlock three variants that promote and require very different play styles – Precision is all about accuracy, speed and efficiency, Covert is a stealth run while Demolition is, as the name suggests, geared around the blowing up of things that don't belong to you. Some require specific gear or loadouts, often meaning you'll have to return to them when your bank balance is looking healthy enough for you to be able to afford all the necessary equipment. But with each offering different objectives and rewards there are effectively four levels for every one listed, and that's before you even begin replaying old favourites in your quest for leaderboard supremacy. So while it might seem slender at only nine missions, to ignore the replayability it was created around is as stupid as claiming that *Street Fighter IV* is too short because you can finish Arcade mode in under ten minutes.

A score attack game lives or dies by its mechanics and, while simple, *Mercenary's* are never less than serviceable. Everything you do earns you cash, with greater rewards for more skilful play – assassinations, environmental kills, headshots, long-range kills and quick streaks all help cashflow immensely,

making a proper run all about either getting through undetected (for a healthy flow of silent kill rewards and a big bonus at every checkpoint you reach unnoticed) or setting up perfect little pockets of ultra-violence and executing both plan and enemies with precision. These core mechanics carry over to multiplayer as well, with matches judged on income rather than just kill count. It's a matter of quality over quantity when you head online, a handful of precise kills and diligent looting often enough to beat out spray-and-pray players who claim double the amount of scalps. Player count is capped at eight, although the maps are smaller than those in most console shooters to reflect this and, as such, it always feels like there's plenty going on.

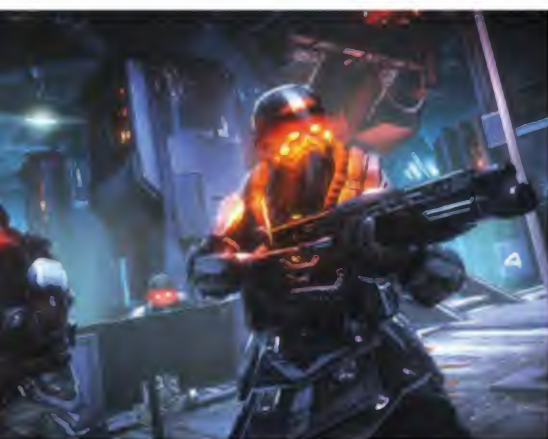
The other big change to the standard *Killzone* formula is the VAN-Guard system, allowing players to purchase and equip one of eight unique hi-tech tools. Offline, it's all about picking the right one for the contract you choose, with optical camo for Covert players and an orbital laser for Demolition fans. But when you get online, it's just about picking the one that works for you and with a selection of loadouts available, you can easily change these up on the fly if your drones just keep getting shot down or you need a little more clout in the form of a shoulder-mounted missile launcher. While these potent tools recharge slowly over time, they can also be found in the field, if you can stay alive long enough to retrieve them from the drop-pods that create ad-hoc choke points on the confined maps.

And with everything you do both online and solo contributing to your bank balance and your rank, the whole thing feels like one cohesive package. Expensive gear needed for some of the single-player Contracts can be paid for with online winnings or conversely, additional multiplayer loadouts can be funded through repeating solo missions in the grip of score attack frenzy. It's rare that even top-flight console shooters manage to achieve such a healthy connection between solo and multiplayer modes – for a handheld shooter, it's positively unparalleled.



How has Guerrilla managed to squeeze this much power out of the Vita? It's pure witchcraft...

It's rare that even top-flight console shooters manage to achieve such a healthy connection between solo and multiplayer modes

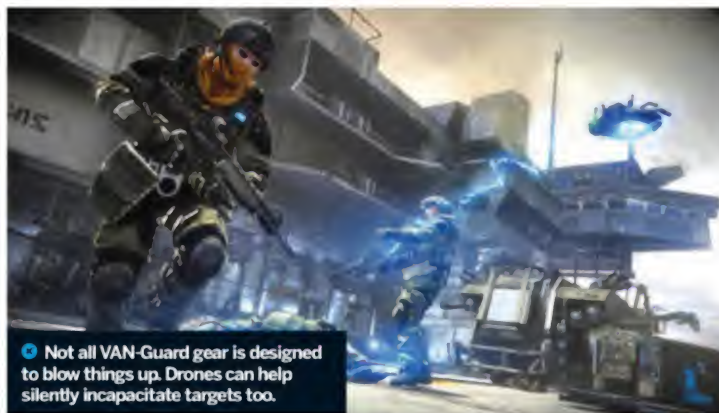


Enemy AI is refreshingly believable – even in a heated battle, they can lose sight of you.

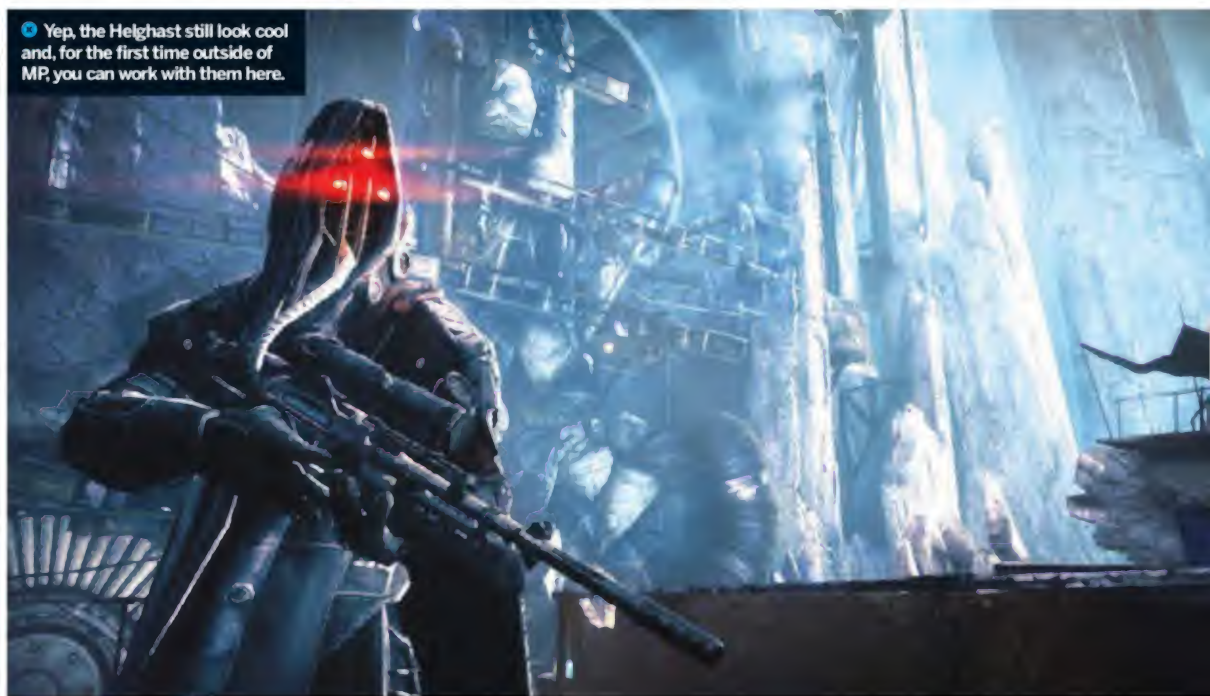
Or you could try



Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified Issue 227
The biggest shooter in the world is somehow the worst game on Vita. Go figure. 18%

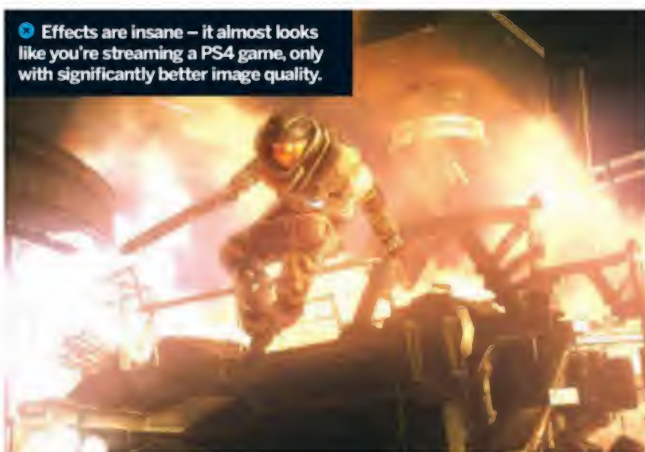


Not all VAN-Guard gear is designed to blow things up. Drones can help silently incapacitate targets too.



Yep, the Helghast still look cool and, for the first time outside of MP, you can work with them here.

Effects are insane – it almost looks like you're streaming a PS4 game, only with significantly better image quality.



And while there are a few of the token nods to Vita's unique functionality, even these generally work well. Directional swipes for melee attacks are generous enough to never really pose problems, also adding a novel feature in multiplayer where victims can resist melee kills with a quick enough counter-swipe of their own. Even more abstract uses of the touch screen (such as targeting missiles or laser strikes) aren't as jarring as similar ones in games like *Uncharted: Golden Abyss* or *Gravity Rush*, which pretty much constitutes a win.

Having seen the joys of Remote Play for PS4 games, we've found ourselves daydreaming about playing games like *Shadow Fall* on Vita. But thanks to *Mercenary*, we don't even need to wait – we've got a console-standard shooter native to the handheld and designed with it in mind. The best-looking game on Vita by far and quite possibly the best handheld shooter there has ever been, *Mercenary* is awesome.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Mercenary is perfect proof that Vita is capable of reproducing console-standard first-person shooters and a game ingeniously tailored to its handheld platform. It doesn't hurt that it's the best-looking handheld game ever made, either.

88%

POCKET ACES

Can you complete a full deck?

WE'RE NOT ENTIRELY sure what playing cards have to do with the gun-for-hire lifestyle of a mercenary but even so, one of the most intriguing and compelling mechanics here is the Valor system. As you play, you're awarded a card based on how much you earn on any given day and how you do it – income and ability are graded from Two through to Ace, with the suit based on the main weapon type used. Your own cards are added to your archives as you play, as are those collected from online victims, and while trying to complete a full deck may feel a little arbitrary, it's also bizarrely addictive...



Killzone: Mercenary

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Puppeteer

Dancing to a different tune

PS3 Sometimes a numerical scale just doesn't cut it. You wouldn't rate one son higher than his brother because his school report says he's better at spelling *and* sports. Numbers are great for quantifying good and bad, but not for showing that something is special. That's the problem with trying to score *Puppeteer*: it's not perfect – it's not always even enjoyable – but it *is* special, an electric fairytale in an age of po-faced, gritty shooters.

Puppeteer puts you in the wooden clogs of a boy named Kutaro, who's been snatched

It doesn't do comedy as well as the Lego games, and playing with half the sound off feels like a sad compromise

away from his fleshy, earthbound existence to the moon by the sinister Moon Bear King. He's led a lunar insurrection and seized control of the Moon, you see, and now must sustain his power by consuming the souls of kidnapped kiddywinks from Earth. This he does by pulling their heads off and repurposing their bodies as

spiky monsters to guard his ill-gotten kingdom. Think *Pan's Labyrinth* meets *Hostel*.

Actually, don't think that – it's not even a quarter of a per cent like that. Fortunately for real-world kiddywinks and parents, *Puppeteer*'s characters good and bad are all made from virtual wood blocks – so the screen isn't perpetually doused with arterial spray. The action is cutesy slapstick: goodies and baddies jump, spin and tumble about just as if they were on strings, and the game's action plays out in a mock puppet theatre complete with hurried

set changes, spotlights and a cheering audience. SCE Studio Japan has also taken some artistic liberties in its depiction of the moon, in that it's

now filled with lush vegetation, rolling seas full of mermaids and Wild West frontier towns. Visually, then, *Puppeteer* is properly gorgeous – and definitely child-safe.

The head-chopping motif also serves more purpose than a one-off 'eek!' moment. Reclaiming and reattaching his head is Kutaro's

primary motivation (besides ousting the Moon Bear King and freeing his captive souls). But here's the kicker: without a head, Kutaro's wooden body falls to pieces in a matter of seconds, so to see out Kutaro's quest you'll need to find replacements. You can find heads scattered throughout the game's colourful levels, some of them in plain view and others hidden behind simple puzzles. Each head grants a special ability that might unlock a bonus stage or some points reward, but more critically they also serve as Kutaro's health. You can carry three heads at once, switching between them on the fly, but if you're hit by an enemy or fall off a platform, yours will detach and bounce around, necessitating a panicked scrabble to get it back. Lose all three heads, and it's back to the last checkpoint with you.

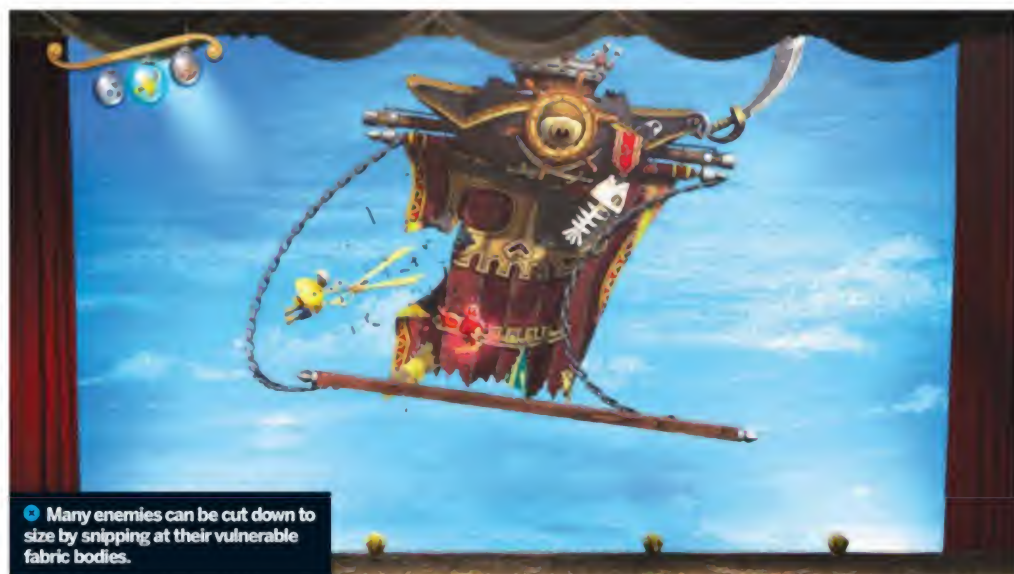
The game's other winning mechanic is its cutting ability. Early in his adventure, Kutaro finds a pair of magic scissors (genuinely) called Calibus that lets him snip through any of the fabric objects, backgrounds or enemies in *Puppeteer*'s world. But Calibus also pulls Kutaro along behind it, even through the air, so Kutaro can use it to reach areas that would be otherwise inaccessible. For example, a fire might produce little puffs of fabric smoke that rise up into the air, which Kutaro can then cut through to fly to a new platform. Calibus is also Kutaro's primary weapon – many of the game's larger enemies will have vulnerable stages in which you'll have to cut through fabric bodies or strategically snip at the environment to cause them damage. As you make your way through the world, defeating the Moon Bear King's generals and collecting new abilities like bodyslams and bombs, the base experience of snip-snip-snipping your way around is always a pleasure, never a chore.

Sadly, like we said, *Puppeteer* isn't perfect, and sadder still it's the story and characters that drag it down. *Puppeteer* has a real problem finding the line between childlike and childish to the point where, as an adult, you can start to feel a little excluded. While the first hour is spent gawping at the scenery, once you're settled in the secondary characters' sassy, Disney Channel dialogue *really* starts to grate. It's something you



DETAILS

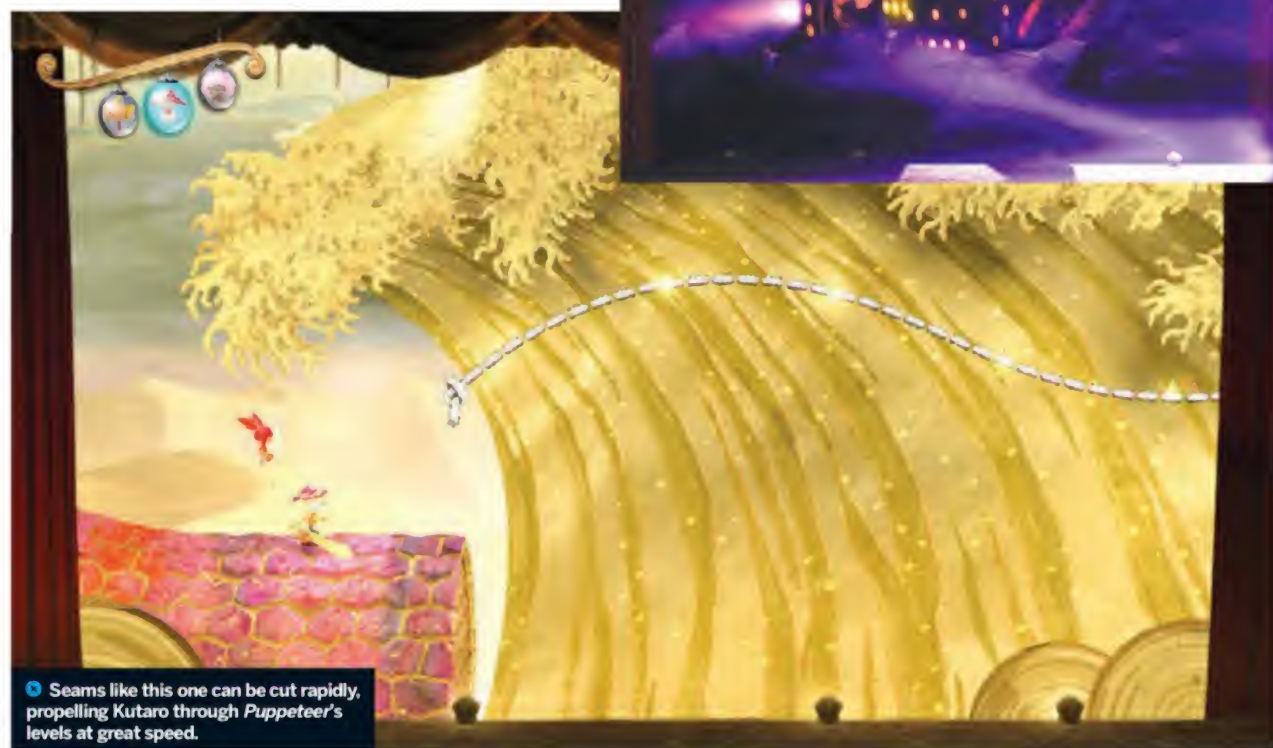
Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
SCE Studio Japan
Price
£24.99
Players
1
Genre
Platformer
Age Rating
12+
Website
www.uk.playstation.com/puppeteer



Many enemies can be cut down to size by snipping at their vulnerable fabric bodies.



Calibus, Kutar's magical pair of scissors, is both your primary weapon and means of transportation.



Seams like this one can be cut rapidly, propelling Kutar through Puppeteer's levels at great speed.

can turn off in the options (although in doing so you'll also lose the spiffing British narrator), but the game feels disappointingly empty for it – it doesn't do physical comedy as well as the *Lego* games, and playing with half the sound off feels like a sad compromise.

As you progress, the fairytale narrative also starts to run away with itself. Between levels you might have to sit through *three* different cut-scenes with characters all essentially telling you the same thing: platform through the next level and defeat another Moon general. There is a skip function for the cut-scenes, but as always this feels like cheating. Some harsher editing would have been welcome.

The end result is a game that does a lot more right than wrong, but doesn't really have a clear target audience. If you like platformers and are old enough to drive, the scissoring gameplay and colourful Punch and Judy sets are a treat – but it'll be hard to shake the feeling that what you're playing is, essentially, a game for kids.

Richard Wordsworth

VERDICT

If you *are* a kid, we'd recommend it without a second thought (apart from its PEGI 12 rating, which means we can't), but *Puppeteer* is a conundrum. However, it's a beautiful one, quite unlike anything else on PS3. And that makes it worth a look, score be damned.

70%



Kutar's quest is colourful, beautifully animated and full of (sometimes overly) zany characters.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Lost Planet 3

Trapped under ice



DETAILS

Publisher
Capcom
Developer
Spark Unlimited
Price
£39.99
Players
1-10
Genre
Third-Person Shooter
Age Rating
16+
Website
www.lostplanetthegame.com



Jim Peyton looks like a cross between Nicolas Cage, Donald Sutherland and a potato. Our *Lost Planet 3*

hero has a beard that's perfectly round and a panicked grimace permanently etched on his face, as though someone's about to discover he's blocked the last working toilet on EDN III. You might think it's odd that we'd mention Jim Peyton's face, because who cares what the lead hero looks like in any game, right? But *Lost Planet 3*'s everyman is the only good thing here.

That's because Capcom forgot to tell Spark Unlimited what it is that made *Lost Planet* good to begin with, which leaves the third entry on the series desperately clinging onto the merits of its bearded hero when all else fails. Maybe Capcom itself had forgotten, which is why it put in the call to Spark Unlimited to begin with. Maybe it should have asked us instead.

"Well," we would have replied, leaning back in a black leather chair and lighting up a cigar, jabbing it Capcom's way to ensure we had its full attention. "You need to start with the Akrid." The Akrid are the insect things that make up the vicious wildlife on EDN III and they're tough bastards, the only sign of weakness being glowing orange weak spots. Battles against them were desperate scrambles to work the right angles to shoot at those exposed sections and the whole point of fighting them was to see them explode in a hot, fiery shower of T-ENG lifeblood. They were huge creatures that



Imagine prodding this thing in the shoulder with your finger until it dies. That's every battle in *Lost Planet 3*.

dwarfed you, and Akrid encounters were one of the series' trademarks.

Note how we say 'were'. The Akrid in Spark Unlimited's game aren't like that. They're sad imitations of what's come before in the series, bumbling about offering no real threat. There's simply no sense of danger from them, no explosive and exciting arsenal of weaponry to blow them away with. It's just a series of pathetic, lifeless guns, the equivalent of someone poking you in the shoulder until you can muster up the effort to push them away. The worst is when Akrid die. Rather than drowning in a shower of orange lifeblood, you now watch the Akrid go limp like a sad piñata, T-ENG dribbling to the floor. So disappointing. So weak. So lame.

"And don't get rid of the guns on mechs!" we'd then shout, slamming our fist against the table to emphasise each word, rattling the teacups. If Akrid were the oversized enemy of the *Lost Planet* series, mechs were your one weapon to strike back. The Rigs have returned here but, rather than boosting around the snowy fields

playing mix and match with giant shotguns, miniguns or lasers that shoot homing, glittering death, mechs are now lumbering beasts stuck with a swipe and a drill move. Oh. And when action makes up the bulk of your game, well, you had better make sure it's good. *Lost Planet 3* fails. Again.

So it's only really Jim's oddly personal story and his perfect beard that keeps you going, his story of a man just trying to get through his day job to support his family back on Earth. The first few objectives are mundane – go fix this mooring, go plant that T-Post – yet it's oddly engaging simply because it's bringing something new to

the series, it's fairly unique and there's nothing else like it. Eventually a conspiracy starts to unfold and the plot loses its footing a little but it's still a strong narrative, helped by the voice messages between Jim and his wife and strong voice acting. But strong voice acting has never been a reason to buy a game before, and *Lost Planet 3* isn't going to change that.

"Multiplayer, that was good in the other *Lost Planet* games!" says Capcom, scratching its head with confusion. "Wasn't it?" It was. Surprisingly so. Multiplayer was the unexpected saviour of the original *Lost Planet* and became the focus of its unfairly maligned sequel. Yet it doesn't even come close to working here. It has the same elements as in previous games – you can grapple-hook around each map, there are mechs (with guns!) and you have to capture points on the map. But again, the combat lacks any impact and the strategic veneer has been lost. It's a flat, lifeless experience. What makes it worse is that the weapon upgrades are horribly unbalanced in favour of veteran players who have accrued experience points, swaggering around *Lost Planet 3*'s servers with their freshly unlocked Doom Laser 9000 and 8 million

The Akrid go limp like a sad piñata, T-ENG dribbling to the floor

When messages from your in-game wife are more exciting than Shooting Bad Alien Things, something's gone wrong.



Jim Peyton's face is amazing. If we reviewed just his face, *Lost Planet 3* would get 90 per cent.



In this series



Lost Planet 2 Issue 192
The multiplayer-focussed outing for the series was brilliant fun in co-op. **75%**



PROGRESSION SPHERE

Lost Planet 3's one good idea, ruined

THE PROGRESSION SPHERE. It's how you unlock extra weapons and perks in multiplayer and it's a good idea in theory. You start in the middle of the sphere surrounded by a few icons, with distant weapon icons and lots of blank cells in between. The idea is that you spend points unlocking each blank cell to find out what perks lie beneath and work towards the weapon icons teased in the distance. The problem? Too many perks unlock too quickly, so veterans can stock up on extra ammo, guns, reflector shields and perks that lead to accruing even more points while newcomers are helpless and struggle to get started. Additionally, there's no penalty for rage-quitting, so the combination of the two factors means that matches rarely finish with complete teams.



● We're serious about Jim's face. It would get 90 per cent. 'Hypnotising' would be our final verdict.

grenades while new players turn up with a pea-shooter and hope to score a few lucky kills to get them started on the progression sphere. It's like someone told Spark Unlimited what made *Lost Planet*'s multiplayer good, so they sort of had a guess at it and hoped no-one would notice it wasn't very good.

We would have prevented this mess from ever happening. We would have told Capcom to make the battles bigger and more exciting, put guns back on the mechs and to keep multiplayer true to the previous outings. Then Capcom would pass these notes onto Spark Unlimited, Spark Unlimited would make the perfect *Lost Planet* game and we'd be looking at **Play**'s first ever 100 per cent score. Instead we're stuck with another disappointing East-meets-West collaboration and a man who looks like a potato.

Ryan King

VERDICT

There's an engaging narrative here focussed on an everyman just trying to do the best job he can, but everything surrounding it is just so disappointing, from the truly awful Akrid to the limp guns and the unbalanced and irritating multiplayer.

58%



● The worst thing about being in mechs is it's all first-person so you don't get to see enough (read: any) of Jim's face.



● One thing that would make multiplayer better is if it had Jim's face in the corner of the screen at all times.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX

A whole old world



DETAILS

Publisher
Square Enix
Developer
Square Enix

Price

£24.99

Players

1

Genre

RPG

Age Rating

12+

Website

kingdomhearts.com

Twitter

@kingdomhearts

Facebook

[facebook.com/KingdomHearts](https://www.facebook.com/KingdomHearts)

KingdomHearts



We understand the logic behind most major crossovers. Take fighters like *Injustice* and *Marvel Vs Capcom*, for instance. They serve to settle long-standing playground arguments and watercooler debates alike, pitting popular heroes against one another to find out who would win in canonically impossible matchups. They serve a purpose; they answer a question. *Kingdom Hearts*, by contrast, is the answer to a question literally nobody has ever asked or *will* ever ask – ‘why isn’t there a game where Squall from *Final Fantasy VIII* talks to Donald Duck?’

But whatever Bizarroworld brainstorm session *Kingdom Hearts* was cooked up in, we’re glad it took place – as much as the premise might be mad as a barrel of badgers, the franchise is the pinnacle of gaming fan service and the core games are some of the best action-RPGs in the PlayStation back catalogue. Returning here in glorious high definition is the definitive *Final Mix* version of the original game, joined by a previously Japan-only remake of GBA oddity *Chain Of Memories* and the cut-scenes from DS spin-off *358/2 Days*. It’s an odd little selection box in keeping with its similarly odd title, but the spruced up original is the main attraction and, we’re glad to report, is worth the admission price alone.

Final Mix only ever came out in Japan, but the updated version fixed a lot of problems with the first game and brought its mechanics more in line with the superior sequel – the notoriously terrible camera from the original was sort of fixed, for instance, while a bunch of new content was added. It’s also perhaps the best in the series from a story perspective, if only because none of the others make a lick of sense whereas this *almost* does in its own daft way.

Considering there’s just a single button for melee attacks, *Kingdom Hearts* boasts a surprisingly deep combat system – the closest modern analog is *Metal Gear Rising*, with much of the oft-overlooked nuance here coming from the ability to deflect incoming

attacks by timing your own to meet them. It’s not something that’s particularly important on the newly added Easy difficulty or even Normal (outside of a few of the more epic fights), but it’s crucial to master to even stand a chance of beating Proud mode. For a game the features mini-games about bouncing with Tigger and rescuing dalmations, *Kingdom Hearts*’s Proud difficulty is terrifyingly sadistic. It doesn’t help that several key skills – such as Dodge Roll and Block – are locked away until you’ve progressed enough, but trust us when we say that only *KH* veterans should attempt a Proud run.

And it’s not just combat that’s tricky, either. Although neither camera nor level design is up to much, there’s an awful lot of platforming involved, and while leaping around in search of secrets is quite enjoyable, falling down thanks to a camera hiccup or off-screen enemy and having to laboriously work your way back up is far from it. The game’s opening – by far the weakest section – is the worst offender here, a string of menial fetch

It’s an easy recommendation for both lifelong Disney fans and Square diehards alike

quests and ropey platforming sections before the first Disney characters and worlds are even introduced properly. Once you reach Traverse Town and start branching out into the various themed universes, things improve dramatically – platforming is less common (outside of exploring and hunting down secrets) while combat is much better with Donald and Goofy by your side. They fill mage and tank roles respectively and, while you never directly control them, there are enough variables that can be tweaked in the menu to get them behaving as you want, though they too suffer from limited usefulness until certain key abilities are learned by levelling up and/or progressing through the story.

With generally strong mechanics and a great variety of worlds to explore and

characters to meet, *Kingdom Hearts* still stands up pretty well today. And with an impressive HD transfer backing that up, it’s an easy recommendation for both lifelong Disney fans and Square diehards alike, although it still remains true that you really have to fall into one (or ideally both) of those categories to fully enjoy the game.

This is both a great introduction to a quirky yet popular franchise and a chance for existing fans to enjoy a twist on an old favourite, with the additional content clearly geared towards the latter audience. *Re:Chain Of Memories* employs an initially baffling card system to power its combat, splicing action elements from the second game with original mechanics to create something unique, if not as accessible as the main game. And as for *358/2 Days*, it appears here only in non-interactive form – you can sit through the baffling cut-scenes from the weak DS game here if you like, but there’s little real reason to do so beyond unlocking a few Trophies.

With *Kingdom Hearts III* recently announced for PlayStation 4, *Kingdom Hearts 1.5* is the perfect way to get acquainted with the series or refresh your memory as to how it all began. Between the two tricky

Platinums on offer and the possibility of a second HD pack featuring *Kingdom Hearts II*, it at least seems like there’ll be plenty of brilliantly bonkers crossover action to make the inevitably huge wait for Sora’s PS4 debut slightly more bearable...

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

It scrubs up well, and even though aspects of it show its true age, it’s still a great little action-RPG made all the more appealing by just about the biggest helping of fan service ever to be crammed onto a single disc. Now if Square would just hurry up with *KHII HD* and *Kingdom Hearts III*...

80%





The Heartless respawn all the damn time, so exploration can often be quite the grind.



Arena battles get pretty rough.

Sora earns bonus experience for deflecting enemy attacks.



On Proud mode, Donald's healing really saves the day.



FLIGHT OF FANTASY

Build and pilot your own (rubbish) spaceship

GETTING FROM ONE world to another isn't as simple as just selecting them from a menu – you actually need to fly between them yourself. Gummi Ship sections play out a lot like SNES classic *Starwing*, and while they're not particularly user-friendly thanks to awkward targetting and even more awkward controls, it's the process of actually constructing the ship that causes the most headaches. Although there are plenty of cool pieces to collect and use, the ship editor itself is wildly counter-intuitive, plus there's no focus on aerodynamics or general practicality – the best ship is usually just a big ol' unsightly block of square armour pieces with a huge rocket slapped on the back, a couple of amusingly small wings and every weapon you own bolted onto the side.





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FROM NEW WAYS TO PLAY TO BLITZING GAMES IN RECORD TIME, TAKE A LOOK AT A FEW OF THE WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN SQUEEZE EVERY LAST DROP OF FUN OUT OF EVERYTHING YOU OWN...

DLC

Of course the easiest way to get more out of a game is to feed in your credit card details and just buy more of it – no Games Media Awards for us there. But while DLC for recent titles can still be a hefty outlay, rifle back a few years through your PS3 game collection and we guarantee (in the least legally-binding way possible) that you'll find an old favourite that's since not only had a wealth of downloadable content heaped upon it, but downloadable content that's also come tumbling down in price. And we don't mean cosmetic fleecing tricks like new costumes or weapons skins (we're here to shoot monsters and steal cars, not find our perfect look for autumn) – we mean full story expansions with new characters, vehicles or mechanics that elevate the original game to new heights of brilliance. There's a wealth of choice on PSN, but for our money (or rather, yours), you can't go wrong with these.

RED DEAD REDEMPTION: UNDEAD NIGHTMARE

Because if this console generation has taught us one lesson, it's that everything's better with zombies. Another ace piece of Rockstar DLC, *Undead Nightmare* turns John Marston's rootin' tootin' Wild West playground into a foetid zombie sandbox, with new characters, locations, story and zombie bears. Yes. Zombie bears.



GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

The Ballad Of Gay Tony might arguably be the best piece of DLC to ever come to PlayStation, but don't forget *GTA IV* also got Heli's Angels simulator *The Lost And Damned*. If you're in the market for both (and if not, it's probably only because you bought them on release, you goodie-two-shoes, you) you can pick both add-ons up in the *Episodes From Liberty City* pack, which also adds three new radio stations to the general stunt driving, helicopter jacking, handlebar moustache-wearing hi-jinks.



FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

Bethesda Softworks gets DLC – both the *Fallout* and *Elder Scrolls* series have had tip-top expansions rolling months after the game's launch (fabulous horse armours notwithstanding). *Fallout: New Vegas* got four add-ons: *Dead Money*, *Honest Hearts*, *Lonesome Road* and the exceptional *Old World Blues*. Better still, they're each available on the cheap individually (or if you're new to Vegas, they're all bundled together in the *Ultimate Edition* for around £15).



MULTIPLAYER CHALLENGES

Too often a multiplayer mode means some bolted-on, cannibalised levels from the single-player thrown together in a tumble dryer with some wonky flag-capturing mechanic in the last month of development. But online doesn't have to be a series of dour-faced shooter players all vying humourlessly for the top score, or a broken last-minute deathmatch mode that was only ever included to tick a box on a publisher's things-that-*Call Of Duty* does checklist. Whether it's a smart bit of co-op story, a free community level editor or just a novel way of arsing about to troll serious-faced gamers who by rights should be at school or doing their homework, there's plenty of PSN action for people willing to seek it out. People like us. People like you.



FAR CRY 3 CO-OP MODE

In all the bustle around its excellent single-player campaign and humdrum multiplayer elements, there's a whole swathe of *Far Cry 3* fans that never touched its four-player online co-op – for shame. There's nothing as insulting as inventing three twin Brody brothers here; *Far Cry 3*'s co-op is a completely separate story of Rook Island and includes six new missions to blast, snipe or chop your way through.

CALL OF DUTY BIZARRE-O WEAPONS

It's easy to get stuck in a routine with an online FPS. Instead of going with your default loadout every session, try playing a few rounds using only C4 or the crappiest machine pistol or shotgun. Your kill/death ratio will take a massive hit, but beating even one other 'serious' gamer with your ACOG-scooped Scorpion makes for priceless jeering rights.



HITMAN: ABSOLUTION CONTRACTS MODE

It's not technically multiplayer, but Contracts Mode is a unique online experience that can add dozens of hours of murder to 47's harrowing CV. Contracts lets you choose a target, a weapon and a means of assassination and then share your new challenge on PSN for a legion of copycat killers to complete. There are hundreds of free Contracts already uploaded for you to get your leather-gloved hands on.

SELF-IMPOSED CHALLENGES

Playing by the rules is for squares.

Setting yourself challenges in a game is a way of restricting and forcing yourself to work creatively – outside of the rules that would usually be placed upon your character. Maybe you decide that your hero will only use hand-to-hand combat or melee weapons, necessitating a more light-footed approach to conflicts. Or maybe you'll shoot for the coveted 'No Hands' Trophy, in which you play

through all of *Black Ops II* using only your feet (Really! No, not really...). Sometimes your efforts will net you a Trophy, sometimes just a warm feeling of self-satisfied smugness at your own ability to triumph even when the odds are stacked artificially against you. It's the honour system Pistols Only mode of your childhood booted forward into the 21st century – break the rules and you're only cheating yourself.

BIOSHOCK – NO VITA CHAMBERS (I CHOSE THE IMPOSSIBLE TROPHY)

Rapture's no stroll in the aquarium at the best of times, but if it's a real challenge you want, take a shot at its 'I Chose The Impossible' Trophy. You'll have to play through the game without ever using a Vita Chamber. Direct combat is suicide: you'll want hacking and whole lot of Hypnotise Big Daddy plasmids. And some blind luck.



DISHONORED – NO POWERS (MOSTLY FLESH AND STEEL TROPHY)

Dishonored's neo-Victorian toy box of powers makes for a fantastic superhero (or villain) romp, but there's a Trophy waiting for you if you can make it through the game without using any magic but the Blink power. That means no Dark Vision, no freezing time – nowt but Blink, your wits and a satchel full of tranq darts. Sound easy? Try scoring this and the no-kills, no detections Trophy on the same playthrough. Go on. We dare you.



SKYRIM – EXTREME ROLE-PLAYING

PC players get loads of mods that add frostbite and let you restart *Skyrim* as a new character with a whole new back story. Yeah? Well we've got our imagination. Extreme role-playing entails making up limitations that aren't included in the game; like having to sleep, having to eat food regularly or an irrational fear of mudcrabs. It's the opposite of breaking the game through Smithing exploits – proper role-players live by their bizarre codes and die by them, too.



SPEED-RUNS

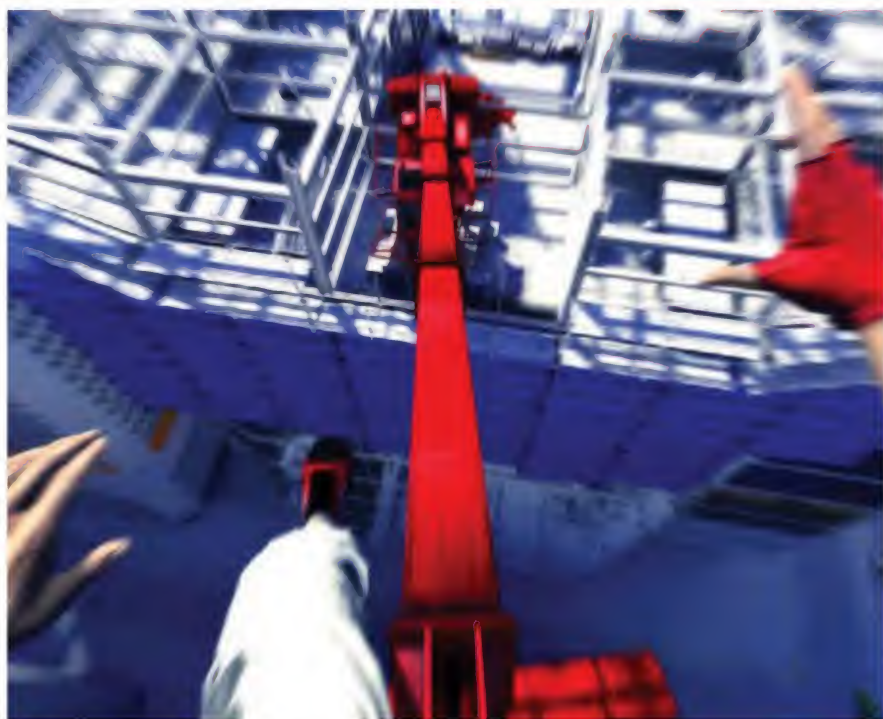
There are games designed for mulling: huge open worlds filled with caves and dungeons and a British Library's worth of back story that die-hard fans spend months transcribing into 15,000 page Wikis. These games are not those. A good speed-run game doesn't just have to be something it's possible to blitz through at pace, but also offer some unique challenge in doing so. Perhaps that's getting the player into

seriously hot water as they end up fighting twice as many enemies as they would have moving cautiously, or maybe it's having to avoid health and ammo pickups in the name of beating the clock. Usually, a speed-run also demands an intimate knowledge of a game's layout to minimise time spent going round in circles, which is why we've picked these three classics that everyone should be at least a little familiar with.



DEAD SPACE

Slow and steady wins the race – that's what Isaac Clarke would tell us if he could speak, which in *Dead Space* he can't. Speed-running *Dead Space* doesn't just mean charging head-on through corridors bristling with space beasts – it also means breezing past most of the Benches and Stores that let you upgrade, running from fights that can be avoided and screaming like a child when you run smack into a Slasher that was hiding in an air vent.



MIRROR'S EDGE

Mirror's Edge is practically a speed-run as it is, but there are two compelling reasons to see out its shonky story in record-breaking time. First, the sense of flow as you parkour across the rooftops of this pristine white future city makes going fast a joy. And second, the combat is pants. Sailing past squads of trigger-happy security forces is a lot more fun than engaging them, and there's a real feeling of disappointment when you screw up a vault or fail a jump. Played right, though, there's nothing quite like it.

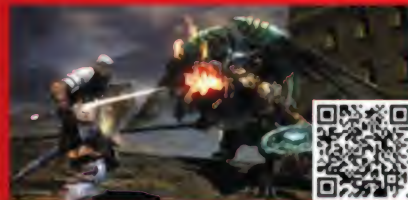


PORTAL 2

There's no sense testing slowly – that cake's not getting any fresher (zing!). *Portal 2* lends itself brilliantly to the speed-run, as working out the puzzles at speed will scramble your brain if you lose focus even for a moment. And once you've become a testing legend in your own right, why not take a sledgehammer to your closest friendships and try a co-op speed-run? Nothing says 'lazy Sunday afternoon' like screaming at your best friend for dropping you in the acid vat AGAIN.

2 FAST 4 U

The internet is full of nutters who can finish games in mere minutes. Here are some of our favourite runs...



DARK SOULS (26:58)

Remember how long it took you to finish *Dark Souls*? Here's a video of someone beating it in less than 30 minutes. And he doesn't even use the Drake Sword. Crazy.



PORTAL (09:12)

We're pretty sure we spent longer than nine minutes just scratching our heads while playing *Portal*. With the help of a pretty huge skip glitch, the whole thing can be finished in that time.



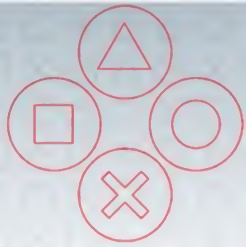
FALLOUT 3 (30:09)

Anyone that played Bethesda's post-apocalyptic RPG will likely have clocked up 50+ hours on it, but it can be done in half an hour with the help of a handy glitch.



CRASH 2 (13:18)

What new devilry is this? There's some trickery at work here, but also a hell of a lot of skill. Respect due for both the good play and the flawless use of exploits.



DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

Like Corvo, Adam Jensen has all sorts of murderous gizmos he can have implanted into himself to make a globe-spanning blood smear of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*'s enemies. But with a flawless stealth system, invisibility augmentations and a sack of non-lethal options, there's no need for the feckless employees of its global megacorps to ever know you were even there.



METAL GEAR SOLID IV: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

A zero-kills playthrough of *MGS IV* is a challenge – so many guns to ignore! – but you'll get bigger rewards for completing it if you also don't get spotted or raise an alarm. The only enemies you're allowed to slot are the Beauty And The Beast Corps – which is handy, as the frustration at having to constantly save and reload will be bubbling out of your eyes by the time each of these boss fights rolls around.



FALLOUT 3

Sure, you can do sneaky in *Fallout 3* – grab a Stealth Boy and just waltz past any fights that look a bit too tasty. Or you can put on your very sexiest pre-war undies (with their +10 Speech bonus) and take to the Wasteland as the apocalypse's least appropriately dressed diplomat. Opt for a talky playthrough and you can still finish the game (especially if you're putting other points into Science and Sneak) and you'll have the warm, radiating glow of knowing you left the Wasteland no more dead than when you found it.

PACIFIST

Many are the games that hands out grenade launchers and .50 calibre sniper rifles like cake at some horrifying redneck birthday party – but that doesn't mean you have to actually use them. If you've raced through your collection with a hair trigger and left more bodies in your wake than an ant river crossing, you're missing out on some of tensest gameplay on PS3. Start a new game with resolution to harm not even a sickly fly and you'll be forced to slip past enemies instead – observing their patrol routes, causing distractions and choosing your moment with precision timing. Or creep up behind them and clobber them into unconsciousness – but really that's following more of the letter than the spirit of the law. Plenty of games offer non-lethal paths to victory, but if you're new to the pacifist's playthrough, you can't go wrong with these titles.

INSANITY MODES

And finally, there are the Impossible Modes. The daft challenges that developers include not for fun, not for challenge, but because they hate you and leech energy from the impotent howls of broken gamers. These perverse exercises in masochism are not for the mainstream audience; not for the kind of sissies who

play games for entertainment or relief. Insanity Modes are for machines – ruthless Trophy hunters who won't put down their controllers until a game isn't just beaten, but beaten into submission. You'll fail. You'll weep. You'll come to hate games you loved, bound to them by emotional investment like a loveless marriage in which

the kids repeatedly bite you in the throat or kick you off floating airships. And you'll do it all for the glory; for the brief, beautiful instant 30 hours later as the credits roll and the Gold Trophy plinks in the corner of the screen – a nod of acknowledgement from the machine that you are, for that briefest of moments, the best of the best.

XCOM: ENEMY UNKNOWN IRON MAN MODE

This is *XCOM* without a safety net. Turn on Iron Man mode and there's no reloading a save to counteract a bad decision or a cheap grenade attack – once a soldier's dead, they're gone for good. Same goes for Council Members that pull their funding, meaning you could play this game for 20 hours... and lose.



THE LAST OF US NO HEARING MODE

Joel's listening ability is your best friend in *The Last Of Us*, but a true survivor doesn't need auditory superpowers. As if tip-toeing through a hallway full of Clickers wasn't already nerve-frayingly tense enough, you can turn Hearing Mode off in the options, leaving you to rely on your under-developed, real-world ears instead. Lunatic.



BIOSHOCK INFINITE 1999 MODE

It's not quite as brutal as Ken Levine promised, but *Infinite*'s 1999 Mode will still kick your arse all over Columbia without some careful planning. Enemies get increased health, pack more of a wallop, they're stingier with ammo drops and there's no floating arrow pointing Booker towards his next objective.



TOP 10 SERIES THAT NEED AN HD REMAKE



One of the best things about the PlayStation 3 has been the vast library of HD remasters of PS2 games, giving fans and newcomers a chance to experience the greats once again in an even better resolution. Here are ten more games we'd love to see again...



APE ESCAPE

We've had various party game spin-offs over the years, but the last time we saw a real *Ape Escape* game was way back in 2006 with *Ape Escape 3*. An HD re-release of the two PS2 entries in the simian-swiping series would be right up our alleys and hey, maybe Sony could throw in the PSone original as a bonus. If sales were good, maybe the powers-that-be would be convinced to make a new *Ape Escape* game on the all-powerful PlayStation 4, at which point the **Play** office would shut down from an overload of glee. *Ape Escape HD Collection*: MAKE IT HAPPEN.



DARK CLOUD

The two *Dark Cloud* games were a couple of ace action-RPGs and an excellent *Zelda* alternative for PS2 owners. With developer Level-5 more popular than ever thanks to smash hit *Ni No Kuni*, an HD port of *Dark Cloud* and its sequel would be great for those who remember playing it on their new PlayStation 2. If it were received well, perhaps Level-5 would even consider a third game in the series for the PlayStation 4. Now that would be something. *Dark Cloud* was a large part of the early PS2 library but has since been forgotten by many – a situation that needs to be rectified.



SILENT HILL

"But wait", we hear you cry, "*Silent Hill 2* and *3* already got an HD collection last year!" Correct, they did, and it was properly rubbish. Plagued by performance issues, a naff new voice track and a bizarre removal of the signature fog that surrounds the town, the *Silent Hill HD Collection* was a huge disaster and not worth your time. However, *Silent Hill 2* and *3* are two of the greatest survival horror games of all time and deserve an upgrade worthy of their glory. The odds of it happening twice are low, but we can keep dreaming. Hell, throw in *1* and *4* and you'll have the essential *Silent Hill* collection.



BISHI BASHI SPECIAL

Bishi Bashi Special is still the best party game we've ever played. Instantly accessible, enormous fun and utterly mad, it's one of the greatest multiplayer experiences in all of gaming. You can purchase the PSone original on PSN right now, but we'd love to see a new version with some new mini-games, mixing them with the classics and creating a whole new level of crazy. After all, how many other games have you playing hot potato with a bomb, or shaking a can of cola so hard it shoots off into space? Truly, the pinnacle of gaming. Well, if you like your games stupid, anyway.

10 Series That Need An HD Remake



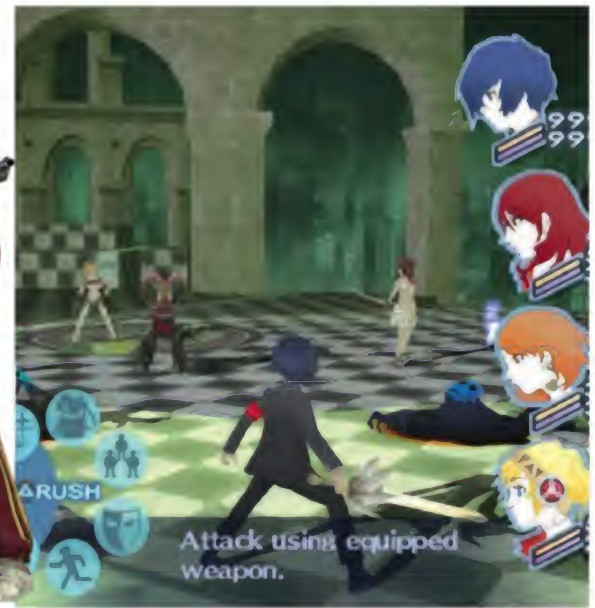
METAL GEAR

We've already had *Metal Gear Solid HD Collection*, but what we'd love to see are fully-fledged remakes of the original two games in the series, originally released on the Japan-only MSX. Western gamers got the chance to play them in *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence*, but a huge number of people are still to experience a crucial part in the overall story of Big Boss and Solid Snake. With *MGSV* set to chronicle the final days of Big Boss in the field before founding Outer Heaven, 3D remakes of *Metal Gear 1 & 2* would bring the series full circle and cap things off in an awesome way.



GRAND THEFT AUTO

It's kind of surprising this hasn't actually happened yet – HD re-releases of *GTA III*, *Vice City* and *San Andreas* would go down a storm. Still the best games in the series in the eyes of many, *Vice City* and *San Andreas* in particular are timeless in their excellence. Mainly, we just want an excuse to relive that phenomenal *Vice City* soundtrack. Slayer! Iron Maiden! Love Fist! Man, we enjoyed V-Rock back in the day. The recent release of *GTA V* has made the franchise more relevant than ever and plenty of people would love to go back and relive their early criminal days.



SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI

There were a bunch of good *Shin Megami Tensei* games for PS2, from *SMT III: Nocturne*, to the spin-offs *Digital Devil Saga 1 & 2* and the crown jewels, *Persona 3 & 4*. Any would be prime candidate for an HD remake, as all are great games that deserve a wider audience. An HD collection of the superior portable *Persona* versions, *Persona 3 Portable* and *Persona 4 Golden*, would be utterly fantastic and a great excuse to experience those worlds all over again, as well as a way to drum up interest for the upcoming *Persona 5*. *SMT IV* is also about to hit 3DS, so a re-release of the third game makes sense.



SUIKODEN

The first two *Suikoden* games on PSone are considered classics among JRPG fans, and the next three on PlayStation 2 also garnered a warm reception. Famous for their huge cast of recruitable characters – with a huge 108 of them in each game – the *Suikoden* series is a favourite among those who have played it, but still criminally unknown to the majority. The series has been dormant for a few years now, but an HD collection of some of the games up to this point, preferably including the excellent original two, would be a cost-effective way to enjoy games that change hands for small fortunes.



CRASH BANDICOOT

The first *Crash Bandicoot* was a fun foray into the world of 3D platforming, but the second and third games perfected the formula into absolute masterpieces. Add in Naughty Dog's final game with the anthropomorphic marsupial, *Crash Team Racing*, and you have four utterly essential PSone games that anyone from the era will remember. HD remakes that make it all prettier while keeping gameplay the same would be a dream come true, and scores of fans would snatch it up without a second thought. Crash might have fallen on hard times since, but his four PSone outings deserve to be remembered.



CAPCOM VS SNK 2

The fighting scene of the early 21st Century was dominated by three games: *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike*, *Marvel Vs Capcom 2* and *Capcom Vs SNK 2*. The first two have received HD ports courtesy of Iron Galaxy, but *CVS2* is still in purgatory thanks to the rights situation behind the game. With characters from two different companies, arranging a re-release is nowhere near as easy as some may think, but if Capcom could renegotiate the Marvel licence, hope might not be lost for it to once again buddy up with SNK. As long as you can turn the crap HD smoothing off and play with the proper pixels, count us in.



YOUR NEXT PS PLUS PLATINUMS

October's PS Plus lineup is one of the strongest in a long time, with a great variety of PS3 and Vita games to get stuck into (if you can drag yourself away from GTA V, obviously). And as ever, we've got some hints and useful advice to make getting those Platins that much less stressful...

TOUCH MY KATAMARI

TROPHIES: 11 ■ 1 GOLD ■ 4 SILVER ■ 6 BRONZE

VITA

We've got a lot of time for the *Katamari* franchise, which is just as well – for such a short game, getting all the Trophies here will take ages. It's mostly because the in-game currency unlocks on a real-time basis, meaning you need to keep playing regularly to rack up enough to purchase some of the more expensive items and modes. There's a dirty little trick if you want to speed through it though. From the Curio Menu, hit the PS button and go into System Settings. Bump the date forward by a day and return to the game – the King should have been tricked into thinking that a whole day has passed and reward you with a bunch of candy. Rinse/repeat until you can afford whatever it is you're after and you can get back to playing the game. You'll need to run each of the Requests a bunch of times in order to grab the rare items and presents, but each can be cleared pretty quickly once you know the layout. It's only the Secret Trophy, Fanatic, that might prove a struggle, and even then it's only because you need such a ludicrous amount of candy to unlock the last fashion item. Too bad there's no Platinum...

DIFFICULTY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN

TROPHIES: 60 ■ 1 PLATINUM ■ 1 GOLD ■ 6 SILVER ■ 52 BRONZE

VITA

The PS3 list wasn't exactly the easiest Platinum, but the Vita list – with its extra Trophies – is even tougher and even more of a grind. A bunch of them just involve using, connecting with and finishing with various techniques but annoyingly, you can't just plug in a second controller and grind these out against a Versus mode dummy on Vita like you could on PS3. There's also the struggle of getting through Arcade mode on the highest difficulty and clearing all the Trials and Missions to worry about, which is hard enough on a decent stick, let alone a handheld. If you're online, be sure to have Fight Request turned on as you play Arcade mode to gun for Any Time, Any Place!, plus there are a load of Trophies for online play, including Your Legend Will Never Die for 100 online wins. The new Vita-specific Trophies, thankfully, are a fair bit easier for the most part – just mess around with the various (and quite horrible) touchscreen control options and modes and you should be able to add a few more Trophies to your collection.

DIFFICULTY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Your Next PS Plus Platinums

GIANA SISTERS: TWISTED DREAMS

TROPHIES: 12 ■ 1 GOLD ■ 2 SILVER ■ 9 BRONZE



Serious Trophy hunters beware – this one is a really frustrating and crazy difficult hardcore platform game and there's not even a Platinum at the end of it all! Story-related Trophies come from simply beating the relevant bosses, but it's the others you need to worry about – Brilliant! requires you to earn five stars on every single level (which will mean replaying the tougher ones over and over until you know them inside out), for instance, while Microsleeper and Hypnotist involve getting trophies for every single level in Time Attack and Score Attack modes respectively. As if that wasn't enough, you'll also need to unlock both Hardcore mode (where you only have one life to get through each level) and Uber-Hardcore mode (where you only have one life to get through *the entire game*), although thankfully, you won't actually need to complete either of these sadistic challenges. You can try, if you like. But we imagine you've got better things to be doing than screaming at a PlayStation for the rest of time...

DIFFICULTY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



FAR CRY 3

TROPHIES: 51 ■ 1 PLATINUM ■ 2 GOLD ■ 10 SILVER ■ 38 BRONZE

Ubisoft's awesome shooter is one of the easiest Platinums in recent memory, with all bar a couple of Trophies more than likely to pop up over the course of a playthrough. You'll need to do all of the co-op missions for the Trophies related to them – these can be done either online or offline, although there have been reports that they don't always unlock so, if you miss one, just replay the mission and you should get it. Just by doing the story and side missions you'll naturally pick up the majority of the Trophies, although a few will require you to play in a certain way. Unheard demands a silent Outpost takedown (you'll need two of these to unlock one of the skills anyway) while Never Saw It Coming requires a Death From Above kill, so you need to unlock the skill first. Some are even tied to specific map locations, such as Say Hi To The Internet (find the buried celeb at X: 619.7, Y: 559.4) and Free Fall (grab the glider at X: 442.4, Y: 651.1 and drop into the ocean), while Fearless Or Stupid can be earned by diving to the deepest area in water that shows up darkest blue on the map. All in all, a dead easy Platinum, especially considering you can still get it by playing the game on Easy!

DIFFICULTY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



DRAGON'S DOGMA: DARK ARISEN

TROPHIES: 51 ■ 1 PLATINUM ■ 3 GOLD ■ 5 SILVER ■ 42 BRONZE



It takes a good while to get going but once it hits its stride and there are huge monsters everywhere, *Dragon's Dogma* is superb. Well, in its own janky kind of way. The good news is that there are no Trophies for the extra super-hardcore content added in the expansion. The bad news, though, is that the regular *Dragon's Dogma* Trophy list is quite the pain in the ass. There are a bunch of missable Trophies and, while you can catch them on a New Game+ run, it's hardly a short game. One even requires you to pick up and complete every main quest in the game, so be sure to keep your eyes open for new missions and return to old areas in search of them. Similarly, there are a few Trophies tied to bosses that can be missed – Solitude only unlocks if you choose to walk away from the Dragon rather than fight him while the Seneschal has two missables; Servitude for killing yourself with the Godsbane blade in the final fight and Peace for simply walking away from him. Most of the Trophies for killing certain large monsters can be earned in post-game area the Everfall, so explore it thoroughly. Bear in mind, though, that the Wyvern (for Serpents' Bane) can only be found in New Game+. You've got a couple of hundred hours free, right? Cool.

DIFFICULTY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



PLAY# PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

TEAM PICKS WE'VE MOSTLY BEEN PLAYING...



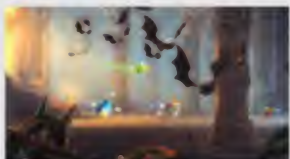
top five LUKE ALBIGÉS

- 1 Grand Theft Auto V
- 2 Diablo III
- 3 Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn
- 4 Killzone: Mercenary
- 5 Rayman Legends



top five EDEN FRANKHAM

- 1 BioShock Infinite
- 2 The Walking Dead
- 3 Counter Strike: Global Offensive
- 4 Rayman Legends
- 5 Prison Architect



top five STEVE HOLMES

- 1 Rayman Legends
- 2 Grand Theft Auto V
- 3 Total War: Rome II
- 4 Splinter Cell: Blacklist
- 5 Hotline Miami



top five SAM SMITH

- 1 Grand Theft Auto V
- 2 The King Of Fighters XIII
- 3 Dynasty Warriors 8
- 4 Dragon's Crown
- 5 Rayman Legends

PS3 LISTING



007 Legends	225	44%
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	43%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	45%
Aliens vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
Assassin's Creed Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BioShock Infinite	230	97%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	223	90%
Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent Arkham Asylum is a serious contender for game of the year.		
It's so rare to play something and know that it will be considered an all-time great. A wonderful FPS with deep, tactical combat. Essential.		
Borderlands 2 is an excellent lesson in sequel-making and is easily one of 2012's best games.		

game	issue	score
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	57%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz!: Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	163	80%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Crysis 3	230	61%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	181	38%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Sequel to one of the hardest games in recent times. Dark Souls is another superb release from developer From Software.		
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	223	78%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	231	65%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Deadpool	233	60%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	235	89%
DiRT 3	206	85%

game	issue	score
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
Dishonored	224	92%
Stealth has never been so satisfying as it is in Dishonored. One of 2012's finest. Do the game a favour and play it sneaky.		
Disney Infinity	235	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	69%
DmC Devil May Cry	227	93%
DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.		
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Dragon's Dogma	218	48%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	40%
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
WARNING: The latest addition to Bethesda's superb franchise will seriously damage your social life.		
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	223	79%
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	227	40%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
Far Cry 3	226	88%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%

This month's new entries

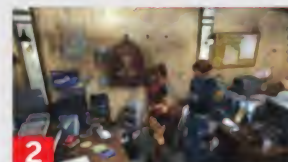
The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Blacklist	PS3	71%
Diablo III	PS3	89%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	PS3	57%
Dragon's Crown	PS3 PSV	87%
Killer Is Dead	PS3	75%
Disney Infinity	PS3	81%
Payday 2	PS3	79%
Rayman Legends	PS3 PSV	83%

TOP TEN SURVIVAL HORROR GAMES



1 Silent Hill 2



2 Resident Evil 2



3 Resident Evil 4



4 Project Zero 2



5 Corpse Party



6 Silent Hill 3



7 Parasite Eve



8 Siren: Blood Curse



9 Deadly Premonition



10 Resident Evil: Revelations HD

game	issue	score
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
Fuse	232	73%
G-Force	183	59%
Game Of Thrones	220	39%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	230	90%
<p>With brilliantly reworked combat mechanics and stunning graphics, <i>Ascension</i> is a gloriously violent prequel to the series.</p>		
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Grid 2	232	79%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	225	93%
<p>It's still a bit rough around some edges, but there's no denying the scope, intelligence and passion poured into <i>Hitman: Absolution</i>.</p>		
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	203	69%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
Ice Age 4: Continental Drift: Arctic Games	222	40%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	210	94%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	80%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Inversion	220	49%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%

game	issue	score
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killer Is Dead	235	75%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
LA Noire	206	91%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	227	85%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	221	45%
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	52%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
Madagascar 3	224	39%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	223	86%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Anarchy*	223	70%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	91%
<p><i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.</p>		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Metro: Last Light	231	60%
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%

game	issue	score
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
MotoGP 10/11	204	64%
MotoGP 13	233	74%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naï'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	53%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	224	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	95%
<p><i>Need For Speed: Most Wanted</i> is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.</p>		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	85%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	223	74%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	69%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
Payday 2	235	79%
Persona 4 Arena	231	91%
<p>Essential for both <i>Persona</i> fans and fighting game enthusiasts, <i>Persona 4 Arena</i> is an absolute joy to play.</p>		
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%

*denotes import review

GAMES THAT ARE RUBBISH



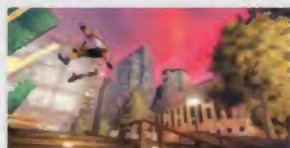
FAMILY GUY: BACK TO THE MULTIVERSE

Whether you enjoy *Family Guy* or not is your own prerogative, but we can all agree that the game is crap. Insuper, one-note gameplay with rubbish graphics and a dash of mild racism combine to make a really, really dreadful game.



THE FIGHT

Perhaps the worst game we've ever played, *The Fight* is a boxing game that uses the PS Move. Or, it claims to, but in reality it simply *doesn't work*. Plus, Danny Trejo does the tutorials and it's embarrassing to watch. Avoid; unless you want Machete teaching you how to wave your wand.



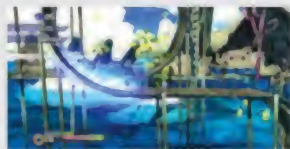
TONY HAWK: RIDE

This is the one that had the huge skateboard controller that barely worked and made you look like a dick as you wobbled around on top of it. Which genius over at Activision thought this was ever going to be a good idea? Just rubbish.



TUROK

Remember the days when *Turok* was good? Well, this one isn't. When it comes to average, forgettable FPS games that don't really need to exist, it's hard to find a better example than *Turok*. In fact, it's so forgettable that – wait, what were we talking about again? Never mind.



SONIC UNLEASHED


Sonic has been shit for years, but the last thing the poor little guy needed was a game where he turns into a bloody werewolf. Sorry, werewog. This game was de-listed due to its mediocrity. Come on, Sega. It might be time to let this hedgehog rest in peace...

game	issue	score
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	54%
Portal 2	205	95%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puma After Hours Athletes	214	58%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	52%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	88%
Rayman Legends	235	83%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Remember Me	232	61%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	71%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	64%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocksmith	223	78%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	220	54%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	199	76%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
The Simpsons Game	160	82%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%

game	issue	score
Skate 3	192	86%
Sleeping Dogs	222	80%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	60%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper Ghost Warrior 2	230	55%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	88%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Sports Champions	196	83%
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	216	45%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	231	52%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	222	77%
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tekken 6	184	94%
Tekken Hybrid	213	79%
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	90%
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	60%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	233	94%
When <i>The Last Of Us</i> is good (winter), it's better than anything else this gen – we do not say that lightly.		
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	55%
The Walking Dead	231	92%
The <i>Walking Dead</i> should be required playing for anyone who considers themselves a fan of our favourite medium.		
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13	217	70%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider	229	90%
Lara returns in this excellent reboot, but she doesn't have a very nice time. Her survivalist origin story is grim, daring, and brilliant.		
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%

game	issue	score
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA Euro 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Fans of the series won't be disappointed as Drake returns with some exceptional set pieces and superb action.		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
Worms Collection	224	85%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE 12	212	50%
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	178	54%
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	94%
Thinking, planning, failing, and dying is back in fashion: XCOM is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%





game	issue	score
A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Dokuro	230	71%
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
LittleBigPlanet	223	93%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	224	70%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	60%
Orgarhythm	230	55%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	228	94%
 Persona 4 Golden is one of the best RPGs around, with great characterisation, a gripping story and smart combat mechanics.		
Puddle	222	82%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	32%
Soul Sacrifice	232	85%
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumoni: Demon Arts	230	46%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	233	80%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	227	84%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arc The Lad	215	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
The Baoning	210	72%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bombberman Ultra	185	82%

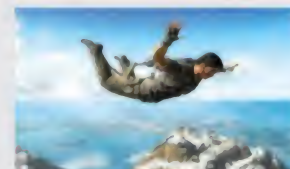
game	issue	score
Braid	188	93%
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	83%
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
The Cave	230	77%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Catan	195	85%
Chirpe Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	16	79%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	168	70%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Counter-Strike: Global Offensive	223	89%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	82%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Deus Ex	219	83%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
Driver	171	90%
Droplitz	184	91%
Dungeons & Dragons: Chronicles Of Mystara	233	80%
Dust 514	233	51%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	169	85%
echochrome II	202	83%
Elefunk	170	45%
Eufhoria	212	85%
Explosion	203	70%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	85%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
fiOw	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
From Dust	211	82%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
God Hand	216	83%
Gotham City Impostors	216	78%
Grand Theft Auto III	224	90%
 GTA III shuffles onto the slowly growing list of PSN classics, and still illustrates why Rockstar's original 3D take on the series was so influential.		
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	219	22%

game	issue	score
GTI Club+	174	72%
Guardians Of Middle-Earth	227	71%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hotline Miami	233	85%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	188	70%
I Am Alive	217	64%
inFamous Collection	224	85%
inFamous: Festival Of Blood	212	76%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Journey	216	87%
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Jurassic Park: The Game	214	32%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killzone HD	225	65%
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Limbo	209	90%
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	220	70%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	210	52%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
Nights Into Dreams...	224	75%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Okami HD	225	90%
 Okami is lovely, just as we remember it, and has been given a treatment that takes it far beyond the muffled visual quality of the PS2 original.		
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Poker Night 2	232	55%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%

PS3'S BEST GAMES JUST CAUSE 2 87%, PLAY 190



Most games try to adhere to the laws of physics, at least slightly. *Just Cause 2* is not most games. *Just Cause 2* looks science in the face before kicking it in the nuts and spitting on it as it falls to its knees.



This is a game where, if falling from a great height, the best way to save yourself is to zip line into the ground, increasing your speed but somehow making you completely immune to falling damage. Science.



Playing as suave super spy Rico Rodriguez, players can purchase any vehicle or weapon to be immediately delivered via helicopter. Want a plane? Buy a plane! Want five planes? Just buy five planes. It's not difficult.



The ability to tether two objects together with your zip line is pretty hilarious. Drag a bad bastard along behind your motorbike or attach a massive tank to the bottom of a helicopter before dropping it on unsuspecting civilians. Oops!



The story is rubbish and the missions are kind of boring, but who cares? *Just Cause 2* is arguably the best sandbox on PlayStation 3, with unparalleled scope for totally gratifying nonsensical action. Silly and essential.

DOWNLOAD THESE THE LETTER M EDITION



MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2

90%, Play 182
One of the best fighting games ever made, with a huge roster of fan favourites and some of the fastest gameplay to ever grace the genre. Everyone should have played this.



MEGA MAN 10

82%, Play 192
Mega Man 10 is an 8-bit NES game that was released 25 years too late. Don't worry though; it's still as immediately playable and rock-hard as the classics you remember from your childhood.



METAL GEAR SOLID

93%, Play 187
You might have heard of this one. Arguably the most important game on PlayStation, Hideo Kojima's tale of Solid Snake, Big Boss, nanomachines and all manner of other mental goings-on started here. Plus, giant robots. Always a plus.



MONKEY ISLAND 2: SPECIAL EDITION

94%, Play 195
Older gamers will have fond memories of LucasArts adventures, and the *Monkey Island* series is considered by many to be the best of all. Relive the pirate fun, now in HD.



MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

52%, Play 210
Some of you might remember this on PS2, famous for an epic opening level that mimicked the beach landings from *Saving Private Ryan*. Yeah, it hasn't aged particularly well. Interesting, if only to see how far the FPS genre has come in a generation.

game	issue	score
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puddle	216	76%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Quantum Conundrum	221	90%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Rayman 3 HD	217	77%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Retro City Rampage	228	78%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	92%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
The Simpsons: Arcade Game	216	54%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Skyrim: Dawnguard	230	70%
Skyrim: Dragonborn	230	84%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode I	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II	220	40%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars Pinball	230	79%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	81%
Superfrog HD	234	41%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
Terraria	232	85%
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles In Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%

*denotes import review

game	issue	score
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Under Siege	207	71%
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Episode 1	233	05%
The Unfinished Swan	225	78%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	90%
The Walking Dead: Episode 1	219	89%
The Walking Dead Episode 2	221	90%
The Walking Dead: Episode 3	223	86%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	83%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk	225	48%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
Wipeout	01	89%
Wipeout HD	172	84%
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Wonder Boy In Monster Land	220	50%
Worms	179	91%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms: Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yars' Revenge	206	57%
Zack Zero	215	73%
Zen Pinball 2	224	90%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zuma	182	78%

PSP LISTING



The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bomberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Remastered	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
The Con	153	59%
Corp Party: Book Of Shadows	230	54%
Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
The Cube	153	64%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%

game	issue	score
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Fate/Extra	219	60%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy III	224	44%
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
The Godfather: Mob Wars	136	66%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Uprising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky	214	75%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
LocoRoco	143	94%
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
MediEvil: Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%

game	issue	score
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Persona 2: Innocent Sin	214	65%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCRoIS	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ - Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
The Sims 2	137	71%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
SoulCalibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%



LUKE ALBIGÉS

WHAT (HAVE THEY BEEN PLAYING?)

FINAL FANTASY XIV: A REALM REBORN

WHY (WAS IT CHOSEN?)

I'm a glutton for punishment

I THINK I'VE SEEN more error messages while trying to log into FFXIV than I have in the rest of my gaming years combined. Does it stop me trying? Does it hell. It's fine, though. I just kick back with a Vita game (mostly Killzone lately, which is ace) while periodically tapping X on the PS3 pad to try to get into Eorzea and, eventually, I get lucky. When I do, the game is brilliant – by the time you read this I should already have hit level 50 with my Warrior, so I can safely say that *A Realm Reborn* is hands down the best MMO on consoles and among the best on the market.



PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Here are the games we've been enjoying when we've not been busy re-enacting the heist from Heat in GTA V...



SAM SMITH

WHAT (HAVE THEY BEEN PLAYING?)

THE KING OF FIGHTERS XIII

WHY (WAS IT CHOSEN?)

It's an excellent fighting game

WE TEND TO HAVE a fighting game on the go in the office over lunch, and recently it's been *The King Of Fighters XIII*. In an era of dumpy comeback mechanics and simplified execution, *KOF XIII* is a hardcore fighting game for real players and a breath of fresh air. I can feel myself getting better, and the action is so fast that your reactions have no choice but to improve to keep up. Add the beautiful graphics and you've got one of the best fighting games of the generation.



PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LIKE...



Giant alien ants

PLAY: EDF: INSECT ARMAGEDDON

The videogame equivalent of a cheap sci-fi B-movie, *Earth Defence Force* looks like crap, sounds like crap, and is full of bugs (pun intended). It's also stupidly good fun. Get it on the cheap, and enjoy.



Excellent fighting games

PLAY: THE KING OF FIGHTERS XIII

KOF XIII is our lunchtime game of choice in the office, and for good reason. It's refreshingly bullshit-free in today's fighting game climate of comeback mechanics and drastically simplified execution. Give it a look if you miss what fighters used to be.



Paradoxes

PLAY: LITTLEBIGPLANET

How can something be both little and big at the same time? What are you trying to tell us, Media Molecule? Are you saying that, if time is not linear, we are both alive and dead in the same instant? Did we ever truly exist?



Cracking good stories

PLAY: VIRTUE'S LAST REWARD

One of the Vita's best games, *VLR* is a visual novel with an insanely complex sci-fi story. Do yourself a favour and import DS original 999 so you understand what's going on.



The Eighties

PLAY: FAR CRY 3: BLOOD DRAGON

Michael Biehn, neon lights, pulsing synth tunes and more movie references than you can shake a sawn-off shotgun at. Plus, ruddy great dinosaur monster things with laser eyes.

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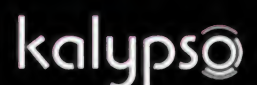
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